

THE LONDON READER

of Literature, Science, Art, and General Information.

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[REGISTERED FOR TRANSMISSION ABROAD.]

No. 771—VOL. XXX.]

FOR THE WEEK ENDING FEBRUARY 9, 1878.

[PRICE ONE PENNY.]



[THE INTERRUPTED CONSPIRACY.]

SINNED AGAINST: NOT SINNING.

CHAPTER I.

A maiden of our century. TENNYSON.

LONG, level rays of sunlight—the glorious sunlight of an early June afternoon, poured across the lawn before Pendleton Hall.

It glittered upon the smooth, glassy lake where the white swans and the ungainly, dusky cygnets sought refuge from it by lazily sailing beneath the overhanging branches of the willows and hazel-bushes, which grew by the margin of the waters.

It scorched up the golden and ruby-coloured salceolarias and brilliant scarlet geraniums which flamed in the trimly-cut flower-beds bordering the gravelled sweep before the broad stone steps, and in the white vases on the terrace.

The day was so scorchingly, blindingly hot that it was no wonder Everil Vane sought relief from the heat in the cool depths of the adjoining forest.

The elements seemed inclined to favour her, for a zephyr-like breath of air swayed the cool, tall, feathery fronds of the ferns, and the long, pale-green, lancet-shaped leaves of the hart's tongue as she seated herself upon a ledge of rock, with the soft, crisp mosses and orchids and honeysuckles beside and around her, the green leaves whispering love-words to each other above her head, and the little brook at her feet bubbling merrily over the brown-mossed pebbles of its bed.

And surely the nymphs and fays and Dryads of that ferny forest dell had seldom seen a fairer mortal amongst them than Everil Vane.

Just in the first flush of early womanhood, the graceful, rounded outlines of her tall, whit-robed figure were thrown up by the background of dark, crisp-brown moss.

She took off her wide-brimmed straw hat to allow the faint breeze to play upon her fevered brow, and revealed a wealth of piled-up, bronze-brown, waving hair.

In gloss and hue the chestnut, when the shell Divides threefold to show the fruit within.

Her pure, pale, oval face was lighted up by a pair of dark, long-lashed, violet eyes, and her delicately-cut, sensitive mouth quivered in a way which told of some heart-sorrow endured during the space of her nineteen years of existence.

Such was Everil Vane, the only remaining granddaughter of proud, violent-tempered, old Lady Pendleton, of Pendleton Hall.

She was an orphan, and the only child of her parents, who had died in India while she was a little girl of but five years old.

Ever since then she had lived with her tyrannical grandmother, who was at once the proudest and the wickedest old woman in Sunnyshire, and, let us hope, in all pleasant England. Lady Pendleton disliked her granddaughter, and did not conceal the fact from her, but she did not take her acquaintances so far into her confidence.

No; to them she not unfrequently complained—in strict confidence—of Everil's wayward temper, at the same time representing herself as a long-suffering martyr, who watched the ungrateful Everil with the anxious care of a tender and affectionate parent.

But the real truth was, Lady Pendleton took no trouble about the girl, beyond providing her with a governess, who let her do pretty much as she liked, and who was discharged on the day Everil was seventeen.

Lady Pendleton said she had no idea of being at the expense of one any longer—so, for three years, Everil had been left pretty much to her own devices, her grandmother not even taking the trouble to take her to London for a single season.

Thus it came to pass that Everil Vane grew up amidst the woods and flowers of Sunnyshire—a lily-like looking girl, and with a lily-like purity and innocence of soul.

She was full of girlish romance, and many an evening she wove for herself as she sat of an evening beside the bright wood fire which glowed upon the hearth in the stately, gloomy, tapestry drawing-room, or wandered beneath the beeches of the grand old avenues of Pendleton Park.

During the summer time this fern-grown dell was her favourite resort.

Here she was accustomed to spend many an hour—when she could escape from her grandmother's sharp, caustic tone—with a book of poems on her knee, or, oftener, with her hands clasped before her as she gazed idly into the green depths of the wood; whilst her busy brain wove some romance of woman's heroism—of suffering for the love's sake; some bitter struggle for some lofty and unselfish end, and in which she was always the heroine herself.

But who was the hero of these romances? For a long time Everil Vane could hardly have answered that question herself.

She had a vague, half-developed idea that he

must be tall and dark and brave and noble-spirited—but no man had she endowed with these combined attributes, until fate had one day thrown her in the path of Leopold Ormiston, of Ormiston Manor Farm.

A yeoman of the good old English type, Leopold Ormiston held the Manor Farm from old Lady Pendleton, as his father and grandfather had held it from previous members of the Pendleton family.

He scorned to try and identify himself with "gentlefolks," as the simple peasantry of Sunnyshire were accustomed to style the lords of the soil.

His boast was that he was an honest English yeoman descended from a long line of yeoman ancestors of undoubted integrity; the men of which were "sans peur" and the women "sans reproche."

A fine-looking fellow was Leopold Ormiston as he walked under the stately elms of Pendleton Park on this broiling June afternoon, attired in a light grey tweed suit, with a straw hat surmounting his crop of rather closely-shorn curls.

He has a long, waving, dark beard that a Turk might envy, and as he catches a glimpse of Everil Vane through the brushwood, his dark hazel eyes gleam with a tender light.

He stops for a moment and feasts his eyes upon her, taking in every detail of her rare and winning beauty.

Leopold Ormiston notes the soft curves of the girl's figure and the graceful abandon of her attire.

There is race expressed in every line of her form and in every feature of her sweet, proud face.

He is proud of his stainless yeoman ancestry, but, at the same time, Leopold Ormiston is not without a feeling of exultation at the thought that he has won the love of the daughter of one of the oldest and most aristocratic families in Sunnyshire.

He was just ten years older than Everil, whom he remembered since she had come to Pendleton Hall, when he was a big, uncouth boy, and used to lead her pony about the avenues sometimes.

Time wore on, the boy and girl ripened into manhood and womanhood, and found they loved each other.

"Everil."

He was just beside her now, for the soft grass had muffled the sound of his approaching footsteps.

With a start she turned her head quickly, and, rising, was at his side in an instant. How lovely she looked with her sweet, flushed face upturned to his!

Leopold Ormiston thought so evidently, and putting his arm around her, placed her beside him upon the ledge of rock whence she had just risen.

"Oh, Leopold!" she exclaimed, clasping her slim white hands upon his coat sleeve, "I am so glad you have come! I have been waiting for you, oh, for so long!"

"So the time has seemed long to you without me, my Everil!" and he looked down with undisguised admiration upon her lovely face. "You look troubled, my darling," he continued, anxiously, as he noted the cloud upon her brow. "Tell me, has the terrible grandmamma been more aggravating than usual?"

"Oh, she is always pretty much the same," she replied, with a wan little smile.

"Then what brings this cloud upon my pretty one's face? Tell me—my Everil, what is the matter with you, my own?" he urged, with tender solicitude.

"Nothing."

But the ripe, red, sensitive lips quivered in a manner which belied her words, and she turned away her head as she spoke.

"You cannot deceive me, my Everil," he persisted, with all love's keenness in his looks and in his voice as he gently turned the fair face so that he could see it. "You have been grieving about something. Come, Everil," with a tender caress, "tell me all about it."

"It is nothing, Leopold."

But her troubled countenance belied her words.

"Come, Everil! out with it, little one! I never can consider anything that clouds this sweet face as nothing. Has the terrible grandmamma been scolding you?"

"N-n-n-no." Spoken in a very doubtful tone.

"The way in which the denial is given sounds very much like an affirmative, Everil. Well, what has Lady Pendleton been scolding you about?"

"Grandmamma has not been scolding me, Leo."

"Then what is the matter, darling?" and he looked anxiously and lovingly into the beautiful, lily-like, downcast face.

"Leo!" And then Everil stopped abruptly, whilst the colour retreated from her very lips, and he could feel her heart palpitating violently.

"Yes, darling."

"Leo," she reiterated, clasping tighter the arm which encircled her so tenderly, "I'm afraid—"

"Afraid of what, my own?" he asked, but with a nameless terror overwhelming him. "Not of me, oh?" with a little laugh as if to reassure her.

"No, no, Leo, not of you!" she exclaimed, vehemently.

"Then in the name of all that's mysterious who or what are you afraid of, Everil? There is something the matter, dearest; it is not kind of you to keep me in suspense; tell me at once what it is."

The girl withdrew herself from his circling arm, and as she turned her sweet face towards him Leopold Ormiston was shocked at the look of despair upon it.

"My Everil," he exclaimed, taking her hand in his, "quick, quick, tell me what ails you. I can bear this suspense no longer."

"Leo," came huskily from her white, stiffened lips, "grandmamma told me last night that she had had an offer of marriage for me from Sir Percival Rossmore, and that I must accept it."

She repeated the words mechanically, as though she were saying them at the dictation of another.

Leopold Ormiston dropped her hands, and a dark shade came over his handsome face.

"And you, Everil?" he asked, with an ominous quietude in his tone. "What did you say?"

"What did I say?" she exclaimed, the colour rushing to her cheek and the light to her eye. "What did I say, Leopold!" with a pitiful quivering of her full red lip. "How can you ask me that? Of course I said I would not marry Sir Percival Rossmore!"

Was that a rabbit or a squirrel that darted behind the branches of the brushwood at the back of the seat where the lovers sat?

It was neither.

It was a woman; fair-faced and fair-haired; a woman stealthy and cat-like in movement and expression.

A woman of about eight-and-twenty, with a look of malignant rage upon her face as she crouched down behind the bushes and listened to the conversation of Everil Vane and Leopold Ormiston.

"Heaven bless you for these brave words, my darling!" he exclaimed, embracing her tenderly.

"There is nothing to praise me for, Leopold?" said the blushing girl. "How could I say otherwise?"

"My darling! you know we have so often spoken upon this subject, Everil, and you know how very strict are my ideas concerning marriage?"

"Yes, Leo."

"I hold that a marriage is no true marriage if it be looked upon as a mere legal tie. There must be mutual love, and above all things, confidence between the man and the woman, otherwise the marriage is not a true marriage in the highest and holiest sense of the word. Do you think I am right, Everil?"

"I do, Leopold."

"A marriage must be a marriage according to

His law as well as the laws of the realm—do you not feel that, Everil?" he asked, looking down gravely at her lovely face.

"Yes, Leopold, I agree with every word you say?"

"Thank Heaven for that, Everil!" he exclaimed, unconsciously raising his voice, so that the woman listening behind the hedge gave a little start. "But why," he continued, "need I keep impressing these things upon your innocent mind, my darling? I know that nothing would ever induce you to swear from me."

"Nothing, Leo!" she asserted firmly, as she laid her hand in his.

"I know it, Everil. I know that no temptations of rank or wealth could tempt you to receive Lord Rossmore as your husband, since you have plighted your faith and your love to me."

"Lord Rossmore!" with a gesture of contempt. "Do not speak of him, Leopold!"

"I have, I know, nothing but an honest heart and our own unsullied name to offer you," he said, but with a certain proud ring in his voice.

"And Leo!" replied the girl, "I have nothing but myself to bring you."

"I want nothing more, my darling," he said, tenderly encircling her with his arm. "A pure, good woman is a fitting mate for any honest man, be he peasant or poor. I would rather marry you, Everil, as you stand this minute in your simple dress, without a second one, and without a penny in the world, than make you my wife if you brought millions as your dowry, and that one breath of scandal rested upon your fair fame."

"How good you are, Leo," she replied, looking up at his handsome, glowing face. "I am not half good enough for you."

"Are you not?" and he gazed fondly into her upturned face with a little amused smile. "Well, let me be the judge of that."

"I am quite willing you should be my judge; but see, Leo," she cried, suddenly, "the shadows are lengthening, it must be growing late, and grandmother will begin to wonder where I am."

"That terrible grandmamma!"

"It is just as well not to vex her too much, Leo."

"You know best, my darling! However, bear with her for a little while; for it will not be long before I take my darling away from Pendleton Hall altogether."

He kissed her as he spoke, and the face of the woman behind the hedge became livid with passionate jealousy.

"You know, Everil," he continued, in a determined voice, "if all comes to all, and that your grandmother insists upon knowing why you persist in refusing to marry Sir Percival Rossmore, you can only tell the truth."

Everil was silent.

"Will you not do so?" he asked.

"I scarcely dare to say anything to grandma," she faltered, slowly.

"Not even for my sake, Everil?" he said, in a pained tone, which touched the girl to the heart; "will you not tell her the truth—namely, that you and I love each other, and that you are my promised wife?"

"It may not be necessary to say so, Leo."

"Everil"—his breath came very thick and fast as he spoke—"it cannot be possible that you could fail me under any circumstances?"

"No, Leo! You know I can never love anyone as I love you! You know it."

"Sooner than see you married to Sir Percival Rossmore, or to any other man, Everil," he exclaimed vehemently, "I would gladly see you lying there dead before me."

"Don't say such dreadful things, Leo," she said, with a little shudder, as she drew nearer to him. "I don't want to marry Sir Percival Rossmore. I don't want to marry anyone but—"

"But who, my darling?"

"Who do you think?"

And she looked up at him archly.

"But me, darling! Is it not so?"

"True!" she replied.

"My queen! my darling!"

And Leopold Ormiston, as he walked hand-in-hand under the beeches with the woman he worshipped, thanked Heaven for the priceless treasure of a woman's true love.

CHAPTER II.

*She was blooming still,
Had made the best of time, and time
Retained the compliment.*

No sooner did Everil Vane and Leopold Ormiston turn and proceed slowly along the river path than the stealthy watcher behind the hedge moved away also.

But not in exactly the same direction.

She bent her steps towards a thicket of hazel bushes, through which she forced her way almost as noiselessly as a stoat or a squirrel.

She was not an ill-looking young woman, and scarcely looked her eight-and-twenty years.

It was the expression of her face more than her irregular features which was so repulsive, for her thin, bloodless, tightly-compressed lips, and her watchful green-grey eyes told a tale of combined cunning and craftiness.

She was about the middle height, of an angular figure, and attired in a light-greyish costume and a small black hat and feather.

On she went in the heat of the broiling June afternoon, apparently unheeding the burning sun which poured its rays like shafts of fire over the land.

It gave a golden tinge to the waving corn, but it burnt up the blue corn-cockle and the red field poppies that drooped their heavy heads beneath Sol's burning and ardent glances.

But Ulrica Warner stayed not to look at these things.

She crossed a stile and took the path through the corn-fields, never slackening her pace until she stood within view of Pendleton Hall, which was a stately, irregularly-built pile of many combined styles of architecture the leading one being Elizabethan.

There were heavy towers, queerly-built turrets, little winking lancet-shaped windows interspersed amongst heavy mulioned casements and more modern bow-windows.

Terraces, smooth and grass-grown, stretched away to the right of the mansion, and upon them struttred a magnificent peacock, fit emblem of the pride of the proud Pendletons.

Breathless, Ulrica Warner paused for a moment to rest.

She took out her pocket-handkerchief and wiped the moisture from her fair, heated face, arranged her already decorously-arranged hair, and then calmly pursued her way as became the vicar's daughter and the model young woman of the parish.

Yes, Miss Warner. Her ladyship is at home," replied Brisket, the old butler, in answer to her inquiries.

But Brisket said no more.

He disliked this sweetly-smiling vicar's daughter, and she knew it.

However, it was part of her rôle never to appear offended with anyone, so she gave Brisket one of her most beaming glances from the green eyes, and said:

"Then will you kindly let her ladyship know I am here, Brisket?"

There was no help for it.

Brisket held the door open, and shut it with a bang.

Then she entered, crossed the hall, followed by Brisket, who throwing open the door of a small morning-room announced:

"Miss Warner!"

What a wonderful old lady was Lady Pendleton. As upright as a dart, although she was close upon seventy, with a marvellously, elaborately frizzed and curled auburn wig surmounting her withered and rouged face, she was dressed in a girlish-looking muslin adorned with a profusion of pale blue bows, and lay back in an arm-chair languidly fanning herself with a large Japanese fan.

Like the lady of whom Byron wrote:

*She had been young.
But now was old.*

Lady Pendleton had been a beauty in her youth, and fondly clung to the remembrance.

She was an instance of a woman unable to grow old gracefully, and failing to realize that the charms of youth are not the attractions of age.

"Ah, my dear! How are you?" she exclaimed, in a mincing tone, as Ulrica Warner entered the room. "Are you not afraid of ruining your complexion by venturing out in the heat of this broiling afternoon?"

"Dear Lady Pendleton!" said Ulrica, effusively, as she clasped the white, withered, jewelled hand held out to her, "I could not let another day pass without coming to see you, since you are good enough to say my visits give you some amount of pleasure."

"Thank you, my dear. But your complexion? Ah! think of your complexion. I could not venture out in such sun—I should be sunburnt. Be a perfect fright in an hour."

"My complexion is not as delicate as yours, Lady Pendleton," replied Ulrica, sweetly, as she seated herself on a low chair near her hostess.

"Possibly," said the vain old woman, complacently. "But you are a good girl, all the same, to walk up here in the heat."

Ulrica modestly drooped her head, and said, with an affectation of reserve and hesitation:

"Dear Lady Pendleton—"

And there she stopped abruptly with a pretty little assumption of nervousness.

"Well, Ulrica, what is it, my dear? Anything about your lovers, eh?" asked the old lady, facetiously, with a cackling laugh.

Lady Pendleton was too blind to see the spasm of pain which passed over Ulrica Warner's countenance, causing it, for the moment, to look quite womanly.

With a brave effort she nerved herself, and replied, smilingly:

"Lovers, Lady Pendleton! I have nothing to do with lovers! No, my kind friend," she continued. "I have come here to-day to tell you of something that I think it is my duty to make known to you."

"You quite excite my curiosity. What is it?"

Ulrica hesitated.

"For goodness' sake, girl, speak out!" exclaimed the old woman, sharply, leaning forward in her chair, and tapping Ulrica's arm impatiently with the Japanese fan. "What is the matter? Is anyone going to murder anybody, or what have you got to say?"

"It is about Miss Vane?"

Lady Pendleton lay back again in her chair, and her face clouded.

"About Everil! Well, what about her?"

"Sir Percival Rossmore has proposed for her, has he not?" asked Ulrica, without looking at Lady Pendleton.

"Yes"—spoken in some little surprise—"but I did not think the affair could have become the talk of the parish so soon. I only told Everil herself about it this morning. Did she tell you about it?"

"No."

"Then how do you know?"

"I accidentally overheard Miss Vane telling it to—a gentleman."

"Ulrica," said Lady Pendleton, loftily, "you are mysterious this morning. I may explain yourself. What gentleman could my granddaughter be on such intimate terms with in this neighbourhood as to speak of our private affairs to him?"

Ulrica Warner was perfectly self-possessed, but it suited her purpose not to appear so. Therefore, clasping her hands, and looking beseethingly at Lady Pendleton, she said, in a trembling voice:

"Lady Pendleton, you will not betray me if I tell you all."

"No! No! What do you mean by 'all'?"

"I mean this, Lady Pendleton: that your granddaughter, Miss Everil Vane, has constant clandestine meetings with Leopold Ormiston, of Ormiston Manor Farm. They have plighted their troth to each other, and it was only this afternoon, as I was euning by the river path, I

saw them together, and accidentally overheard their conversation."

Ulrica stopped, almost startled by the stern look in the old woman's face.

"Go on!" commanded Lady Pendleton; "tell me what you overheard."

"I heard Miss Vane tell Mr. Ormiston that Sir Percival Rossmore had proposed to you for her, but that she had no intention of marrying him."

"Ha!" exclaimed the old lady, becoming livid through her rouge, "we'll see whether she will or not! Go on. What else did you hear?"

"Not much else."

Ulrica wanted to be questioned.

"Tell me all. I must know!"

"Dear Lady Pendleton, I scarcely like to say."

"But I desire you to tell me," said the old woman, vehemently.

"Neither Miss Vane nor Mr. Ormiston spoke very respectfully of you."

"I can believe that of Everil," responded Lady Pendleton, grimly.

And the upshot of their conversation was that Miss Vane is determined to resist marrying Sir Percival Rossmore, and is equally determined to marry Mr. Ormiston.

"And I, Ulrica," exclaimed Lady Pendleton, in a decided tone, "am equally determined that she shall marry Sir Percival Rossmore. Thank you, Ulrica, for what you have told me."

"I was half afraid you would have been displeased," she replied, hypocritically.

"No, my dear, I am much obliged to you for putting me on my guard with reference to that deceitful girl."

"I felt it my duty to tell you, when I overheard the conversation accidentally," responded Ulrica, humbly.

She did not say that for months past she had dogged the footsteps of the lovers—dogged them and stealthily watched them, as only a crafty and jealous woman could.

For Ulrica Warner passionately loved the handsome young yeoman, who, on his part, felt for her and treated her as the merest acquaintance.

"You have done quite right," said Lady Pendleton, "quite right. The impertinence of that farmer Ormiston to dare to think of marrying my granddaughter!"

"I may as well tell you, Lady Pendleton, that I feel sure they will in some way or other circumvent you."

Ulrica wished to excite the old lady to the uttermost.

Oh, if she could only get her to take Everil Vane away out of the neighbourhood—away from Leopold Ormiston.

She had thought deeply over the matter; reflecting that there was many a heart caught at the rebound, and she saw no reason why she should not try her chance with the heart of Leopold Ormiston.

"We shall see!" said Lady Pendleton. "Everil will be a clever girl than I give her credit for being if she circumvents me. Ulrica, you must help me in every way."

And she laid her hand on her visitor's arm.

The green eyes glittered as Ulrica replied heartily:

"I shall help you in every way in my power, but I still say that I think you will find Mr. Ormiston a very difficult person to manage."

"I shall not consult him, nor come in contact with him in any way," replied Lady Pendleton, hastily, "and I tell you this that my granddaughter Everil Vane shall be the wife of Sir Percival Rossmore before another three months have passed over. The very idea of a farmer like Ormiston daring to propose marriage to Everil is too monstrous even to think of. I hate the girl!" she continued, bitterly, "and it is not for love that I interest myself about her future, but simply because my pride would rebel against having my granddaughter married to a farmer and living in the neighbourhood."

Ulrica Warner was only a woman after all, and she could not bear to hear the man she

loved spoken slightly of without saying one word in his defence.

"Mr. Ormiston may not be a suitable match for Miss Vane," she said, with a slightly heightened colour, "in point of social status, but otherwise there is nothing against him."

"He shall not marry Everil," reiterated the old lady.

"As I told you before, Lady Pendleton, I am not so sure of that. He appears much attached to her, and," she continued, in desperation, with a sudden sinking of her heart, "I do not think anything in the world could make him swerve from her. Certainly nothing, except—disgrace."

Lady Pendleton gave a violent start and dropped her Japanese fan. Ulrica picked it up and handed it to her, and as she did so she was shocked at the expression of the old woman's face.

Even through her powder and paint Ulrica could see how ghastly pale she had become. Her withered hands trembly grasped the arms of her chair as she gasped forth:

"What is that you say, Ulrica? Who said anything about disgrace?"

"I merely said," replied Ulrica, whose curiosity was aroused by this strange conduct of Lady Pendleton, "that I believe nothing on earth would make Mr. Ormiston give up your granddaughter, except disgrace. That is, I mean that there were something disgraceful connected with her name."

"Give me that fan! Give me that fan!" exclaimed the old woman, snatching it from Ulrica's hand and fanning herself as violently as her shaking hands would permit her to do. "Let me think, Ulrica! Let me think! Disgrace! What do you mean, girl? Disgrace! How could there be disgrace connected with our name?" she exclaimed, in a burst of unreasoning passion. "You never heard there was, did you?"

"Never, dear Lady Pendleton—never," asseverated Ulrica, who now strongly suspected there must have been something connected with the past which the old woman would fain forget.

"Sir Percival Rossmore has promised me a magnificent set of diamonds and opals on the day Everil becomes his wife," said the vain old woman, lying back exhausted from the vehemence of her passion. "I am not going to lose them for the sake of pleasing two people who speak badly of me. Opals were always so very becoming to my clear complexion, Ulrica!" She bent forward and laid her hand upon her arm.

"Yes, Lady Pendleton."

"You have promised to help me."

"I will do so."

"If disgrace attached to her name will make the farmer quietly resign Everil, it shall not be wanting."

Even the unscrupulous Ulrica Warner was startled at the demoniacal expression of the old woman's face.

"Lady Pendleton!" she ejaculated in sheer amazement.

"Try if the doors are shut fast, Ulrica. I want to tell you something."

In astonishment Ulrica obeyed, and then reseated herself upon the low chair beside Lady Pendleton.

"But first," said the wily old woman, "you must tell me your secret, Ulrica."

"My secret! I have none!"

"Nonsense!" ejaculated Lady Pendleton, with more energy than politeness. "You can't deceive me, Ulrica! You want to separate Everil and the farmer. What is your object in wishing to do so?"

"I wish to serve you, dear Lady Pendleton!"

And Ulrica smiled sweetly in her face.

"That is not your motive—tell me; are you in love with the farmer yourself?"

The question was so unexpected and so abrupt that Ulrica was near betraying herself.

Quick as light the thoughts flashed through her mind.

She loved power, and she had not much womanly reticence, and it would be no great

sacrifice to her feelings to tell Lady Pendleton, so long as she gained her secret in return.

So Ulrica hung her head, and taking one of the old woman's hands in hers, she murmured, bashfully:

"Dear Lady Pendleton; no one in the world understands me as you do!"

"Ha!" exclaimed the old lady, apparently satisfied with her own sagacity, "so that is the reason, is it?" Well, let us get Everil married first to Sir Percival, and then I'll help you to get your farmer."

Ulrica winced.

She did not like to hear Leopold Ormiston spoken of in that sarcastic, slighting tone, but she had a point to gain, so she wisely held her peace.

"I heard Mr. Ormiston say to Miss Vane," she said irrelevantly, and rather incorrectly, "that he would not marry her or any other woman did the slightest stain sully her name or her pedigree!"

"Good!" exclaimed Lady Pendleton, with some degree of satisfaction. "Then listen, Ulrica, we can put him to the test, for Everil is—"

A rustling of a woman's dress—the door opened—and Everil Vane, flushed and radiant, stood before them!

(To be Continued.)

"WAIT A-WHILE."

HAVE you, friend, a prospect golden?
Does shy fortune on you smile?
Then by past experience, pray you,
Don't agree to "wait a-while."

Men there are in town and country,
Laggard souls who preach of fate,
Leaden hands, and feet like marble,
Men who only watch and wait.

Pioneers with hearts of mettle
Long to try the foremost mile,
While the tardy ones reproving,
Cry out, "comrade, wait a-while."

So the child in life's beginning
Learns to daily with the hours,
Putting off the tasks of duty,
Loitering by the wayside flowers.

Yonder lad loves yonder lassie,
Seeks her heart devoid of guile,
But the maid, in opposition,
Pertly answers, "wait a-while."

Have a care, my pretty triflers,
How you "put off" for a day;
Change will come, and life is fleeting—
"While the sun shines make your hay."

While your youthful blood is leaping,
While in robust health you smile,
Full of purpose, march straight onward
Toward the goal, nor "wait a-while."

M. A. K.

SCIENCE.

JOHN WILLIAM DRAPER.

JOHN WILLIAM DRAPER was born at St. Helen's, near Liverpool, in 1811. From an early age his attention was devoted to chemistry, natural philosophy, and the higher mathematics. After prosecuting his chemical studies for some time at the University of London, he emigrated to the United States and entered the University of Pennsylvania. He took the degree of M.D. there in 1836, with the rare distinction that his thesis was selected for publication by the medical faculty. For a time he was Professor of the Natural Sciences at Hampden, Sidney College, Va., and in 1839 he was called to the chair of chemistry in the University in the City of New York.

Among the first studies to which Dr. Draper directed his attention was the chemical action of light. In 1842 he discovered that not only might the Fraunhofer fixed lines in the spectrum be photographed, but that there exists a vast number of others beyond the violet, which up to that time had been unknown. Of these new lines, which more than doubled in number those already known, he published engravings. He also invented an instrument for measuring the chemical force of light, the chlor-hydrogen photometer.

His memoir "On the Production of Light by Heat," published in 1847, was an important contribution to spectrum analysis. It gave the means for determining the solid or gaseous condition of the sun, stars, and nebula. He established experimentally that all solid substances, and probably liquids, become incandescent at the same temperature; that the thermometric point at which such substances are red hot is about 977° Fahr.; and that the spectrum of an incandescent solid is continuous—it contains neither bright nor dark fixed lines.

Dr. Draper was the first person who succeeded in taking portraits of the human face by photography, and was also the first to take photographs of the moon. His memoir on the Distribution of Heat in the Spectrum showed that the predominance of heat in the less refrangible regions is due to the action of the prism, and would not be observed in a normal spectrum, such as is formed by a grating; and that all the rays of light have intrinsically heating power.

He discovered more than forty years ago the facts in regard to capillary attraction, claimed by Mr. Lippman and which lately excited so much attention in Europe.

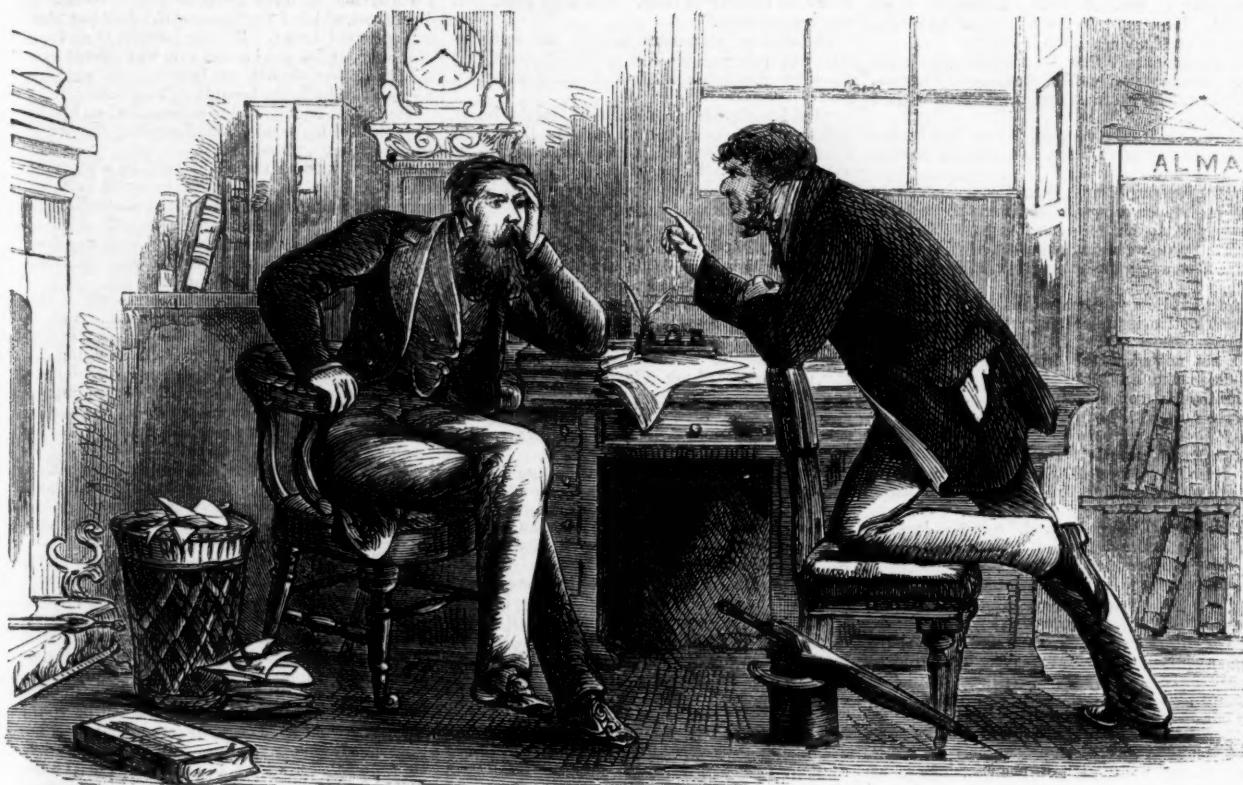
Dr. Draper has published many works on scientific and other subjects, and has made many other important discoveries, too numerous for us to mention here. He stands in the front rank of living scientists. His two sons, Professor J. C. Draper and Professor Henry Draper, have also written much and made many important researches, the latter having lately discovered the presence of oxygen in the sun.

CHRISTIE'S SYSTEM OF INCUBATION.

THIS system has become most extensively used in France, and doubtless before long the unquestionable success which accompanies its efforts on all sides will soon make itself felt with equal force in this country. The system is patented by Mr. Christie, the botanist. It may interest our readers if we say a few words illustrative of the interesting process. There are two machines—the hydro-incubator and the hydro-rearing mother, and together they are supposed to hatch out 100 eggs and rear seventy-five chickens at a minimum of cost and trouble, and entirely dispensing with all lamps, gas jets, and delicate apparatus. Of course the use of the machine will almost be confined to advanced farmers and general food producers. Last year over £2,500,000 were spent in this country on the importation of eggs.

All must acknowledge these figures are terribly high, especially when it is so evident that by slight ingenuity it could so materially be lessened. The theory of artificial incubation is to keep the upper part of the eggs in a regular temperature of 102 degs. or 104 degs. Fahrenheit until the three or four last days, after which the temperature should not exceed 102 degs. or go below 100 degs. Placed in this incubator, subject to attention as above, the eggs should be hatched on the twenty-second day. There is a tell-tale lamp attached to the machine, by which the fertility of the eggs may be determined by the sixth or seventh day.

The hydro-rearing mother, as its name implies, takes charge of the chicks after they are freed from the shell. The autumn season is the most favourable for getting your incubators to work. When this invention gains place in popular favour, which it is swiftly doing, it will undoubtedly have a marked influence on the price of poultry, which is at present so very high all through the country.



[CONSPIRATORS.]

A WOMAN SPURNED.

CHAPTER XXI.

He was one whom the just blows and buffets of the world had so incensed, that he was reckless what he did to spite the world.

CONSTANCE went to the parlour where the others were, and frankly told them that Mrs. Tardy wished to be left alone till bed-time, and Agnes sat down to the piano to play and sing to the two who delighted so much in her music.

Constance looked over a portfolio of engravings, thinking over all that had passed that day, and wondering what new form of malice would be next developed by Brenton and his wife.

That Manvers would be its victim she never once dreamed, though she felt assured that two such evil natures would not cease to plot mischief against those who had once foiled their plans.

Left to herself Mrs. Tardy rested a while, and then sat down before her escritoire to write to Brenton.

She first took out a blank cheque from her banker's book and filled it up for seventy pounds; then she dashed off the following lines:

"SELWOOD, August 18—.

"MR. BRENTON—Sir,—Enclosed you will find an order for seventy pounds, which will be cashed on sight. Miss Deering declines to receive so large a sum as one hundred pounds for the painting your wife so wantonly destroyed. Her first impulse was to send the whole back, but I induced her to think better of it, as she ought certainly to be paid a fair price for her time and labour, and Emma should be taught that she cannot indulge such freaks of temper with impunity.

"Before this reaches you I shall have cashed your cheque, and the balance due you on it the enclosed will cover. Why so large a sum was offered to Miss Deering, both she and I can readily understand. There are some things that cannot be written about, Mr. Brenton, and this is one of them; but you will none the less clearly understand my meaning because it is not put in words. Let it suffice that I fully understand your tactics and those of your wife, and henceforth the doors of Selwood are closed against you both. 'A word to the wise' is sufficient.

SARAH C. TARDY."

After settling this matter the old lady took a final cry over the ingratitude and baseness of her niece; after that she retired, feeling much fatigued, and soon fell into a sounder and more refreshing slumber than she had enjoyed for weeks.

The letter went the following day, and in the afternoon Brenton received it.

He was busy at the time, and curious as he was to know what Mrs. Tardy could have to say to him he was compelled to thrust it in his pocket, and wait till he had despatched other affairs before he could read it.

Manvers had returned, and a long and irritating interview took place between them, though Brenton made every effort to be as friendly and polite as usual to the man who still cherished the delusive belief that his treacherous partner was his true friend.

All the professor had said, Mrs. Tardy's warning, and the doubts of Agnes, had failed to impress the chivalrous nature of Manvers with the belief that Brenton was unworthy of trust. It is so difficult for a thoroughly honourable nature to admit suspicion of one bound to it by ties of friendship and long association, that it seemed to Manvers a species of treason against his partner to give the slightest credence to the hints thrown out to him by his friends.

"What is the use of this discussion?" Brenton at length said. "It is premature, and can come to nothing till you have had time to think

over your insane project of giving up the prospects that are now so fair. I insist, Manvers, that no positive step shall be taken by you till after my return. Six weeks are not long to wait, especially as I wish it so much. You must be aware that I am only influenced by my unwillingness to see you sacrifice yourself in this absurd way. I know that you have been taught to mistrust me, for I have been unfortunate enough to gain the ill-will of my wife's family, and I am sure they have not spared me in talking with you. If you do not agree to my proposal to let things stand as they are till my return, I shall really believe that you think no better of me than they do."

Manvers flushed slightly, and replied:

"If you put it on that ground, of course I will consent to anything you ask, that I may prove to you that my feelings toward you are not changed. What I told you was the truth—I only wish to give up mercantile life. I entered it because it was the only avenue open to me when I started in life, and my mother wished me to follow it. Now that I see my way clear to something that suits me better, I do not hesitate at the course I must pursue. A few weeks cannot signify, especially as I can be preparing for the final separation, although it is not announced to the public at once."

"No—they will not signify," repeated Brenton, vaguely; "nor do I believe that the announcement you refer to will ever be made. Wait till I come back, I repeat, and then decide your future. I am sorry you are so much annoyed at my determination to retain Markley, but I can find no one to put in his place. He will be subordinate to you, and if you doubt him you can keep a strict eye upon him."

"I do doubt him," said Manvers, almost sternly, "and if my mind were not fully made up to retire from the firm, I would not have consented to have him about at all. He and I dislike each other, but I can bear with him a few weeks, I suppose, since you insist on it. I look on the business as yours more than mine, since I came to the determination to get out of it,

and of course you will not put a man in your place who is not, in your opinion, fit to be trusted. He cannot do much harm, at any rate, in the short time he will be here."

"I am not afraid that he will attempt anything to injure me," said Brenton, with unconscious emphasis; and Manvers retorted, with a slight laugh:

"And I shall take very good care that he has no opportunity to hurt me, so I suppose he may stay."

"Guard yourself well, then, for, according to you, he is a cunning fellow, and there is no knowing what he might attempt. I fancy I can see you watching him as if he were a conspirator, and guarding against his plots. Ha! ha!"

The laugh was constrained, but Manvers did not notice its false ring; he carelessly replied:

"I am not afraid of anything Mr. Markley can do in the brief absence you contemplate. I shall look so sharply after him that no opportunity will be allowed him to play us false."

Shortly afterwards the two parted, and a few moments later Markley came into the private office in which the interview had taken place.

He was a heavy-browed, common-looking man, though he was well-dressed, and had the air of one accustomed to consideration from those he associated with. He eagerly asked:

"Have you carried your point? Am I to take charge of the books in your absence?"

"Yes—it is so settled. We had some sharp words about it, but Manvers gave up to me, as he always does. He is the easiest fellow to manage that I ever met with, and if so much was not at stake for myself, I should be sorry to sacrifice him, as we are going to do. We must make a pretty sum out of this affair, Markley, and one-fourth of the winnings shall be yours, if you carry out our plan successfully."

"Oh, never fear about that. I hate the fellow as cordially as he despises me, and I intend to be even with him before I have done with him. I have taken every precaution to secure complete success."

"I know that you will not fail if you can help it, but our best plans sometimes go wrong from some unforeseen accident. I should like to understand what is to be done with him when he is fairly entrapped? Where does your brother live who is to take charge of him? and how does he propose to keep him from making his existence known to others?"

"Trust Kit Markley for that! When once he gets our friend into his hands there's no chance of escape for him, I can tell you. The offer of one hundred a year for keeping his prisoner safe will make him the most careful of gaolers. You wish to know where he lives, do you? In the wildest and loneliest place that you can imagine, where a visitor does not come except by chance. Kit is a sort of wild man of the woods, and he cares nothing about society. I don't mind telling you that he got into trouble when he first started in life, and he's kept out of the way of people since then. I own the land he lives on, and he hunts and fishes for his subsistence. He's a queer fellow, but he loves money, and he'll hold on to his prisoner as long as he is regularly paid."

"But where does he live? is the place so secluded as to defy discovery?"

"His den is among the Welsh mountains, and the land is so poor that the people are few and far between. The nearest farm is at least ten miles from the place Kit has built. It is on a hill-side, and behind it is a cave, large enough to accommodate our particular friend. We must furnish Kit with shackles for his feet, a few ounces of chloroform to use if a stray traveller happens to come along who knows of the existence of the cave, and a gag to keep him quiet when the effect of the drug passes away. With these precautions, I think my gentleman will be safe enough from discovery. He'll be likely to take rheumatism in that underground abode, but that is no concern of ours."

Brenton gloomily said:

"I suppose he will be as safe there as anywhere, as long as he lives. It is only dead men who tell no tales."

The sombre glance he cast on his confederate was returned by one of intelligence, but Markley shook his head and, after a pause, said:

"I value his life no more than you do, but I will have no hand in taking it. On that point I am firm; nor would Kit have anything to do with the affair if he was required to put him away. He killed a man in a tavern brawl, and that is why he is a sort of outlaw, and the poor, weak fellow has never got over it. I don't mean that he's weak-minded, for he's grit enough to know on which side his bread is buttered. I've often wondered of what use he is in the world, but I see now how a cipher came to be added to the other nine figures in arithmetic. He's the very man for our purpose, and he'll serve us faithfully as long as he is promptly paid."

"You have had an understanding with him, then?"

"Of course. I have just returned from his place, and he undertakes to do all we require for the payment I offered him."

"But how are you to get your charge there in safety? If anything should happen on the way to excite suspicion it might lead to ruin."

"No fear of that. I am not a man to take half measures. I have chartered a steam yacht, which is lying idle at her moorings, and employed a sailing-master to have her in readiness by a certain date. Manvers will be so anxious to look after me that he will be here till late at night, and besides he will have so much to attend to after you are gone that he will be unable to get away at an early hour. What will be easier than for me to steal in on him as he sits at yonder desk absorbed in his affairs, knock him on the head hard enough to stun him without cracking his skull, and then put him in the carriage I shall have waiting not far off. I am strong enough to carry him without help, and I shall take care to disguise him so thoroughly that no one could recognise him. I shall take the same precaution as regards myself, for the sailing master I have employed only knows me as a country farmer who has come to England to take his insane brother home with him, that he may be properly taken care of. Don't you think me a man of resources now?"

"So far, so well," replied Brenton, dissatisfied at his refusal to serve him still more unscrupulously; "but how will you get to your destination by water?"

"The yacht will not be allowed to land while daylight lasts, because I do not wish anyone to see the condition of my unfortunate brother. As soon as he is safely on his way to his subterranean prison the vessel will tack and go back the way she came. As soon as Manvers is safely bestowed I shall find my way to the nearest railroad station, and restored to my own identity, come back to this city to meet the inquiries that will be made, and put a false interpretation on the disappearance of Manvers. If that is not being master of the situation I don't know what is."

"You are very clever, certainly, and I see no reason why your plans shall not be perfectly successful. Still I shall be uneasy as long as Manvers is living. To me death would not be half so horrible as incarceration in the living tomb you have described. Why not deal with him yourself, Markley, and take his place in the firm after he is gone? I should be willing to give you a third of the profits if you would perform this service for me."

"If you want the man destroyed, why don't you do it yourself?" asked Markley, abruptly. "I am willing to ruin him, crush him to powder, but I won't meddle with his life. There was nothing said about that when we first spoke on this subject."

Brenton flushed at this inquiry, and then grew pale. He did not dare to say that he had lately attempted one murder and had been baffled; that in the event of suspicion falling on him, the evidence of that would surely be brought against him to ruin, if not destroy him. With a faint attempt to smile, he said:

"I see that your objections are invincible, and I ought not to have tempted you to commit a deed from which I shrink myself. Another plan has occurred to me. If your brother is so fond of money, and a good round sum was offered him if his prisoner should die before long, perhaps he would take little trouble to keep him alive."

He looked keenly at his companion, watching the effect of his words. Markley only shrugged his shoulders and replied:

"I hardly think the charge will be a pleasant one to Kit, and if he thought he could make as much by letting him slip out of the world through neglect, he would not take the trouble to try to keep it. Speak out frankly, and say how much you are willing to give if Kit will take your proposal into consideration."

"I will pay one thousand pounds when the proof is brought to me that Julian Manvers is no longer numbered with the living. I had rather think of him in his grave than dying by inches in that cavern. To die is easy enough—it is but a brief struggle and all is over; but to live in darkness, in hopelessness—to despair of succour—to suffer both mentally and physically—oh! that is horror! horror!"

And overcome by the picture his imagination drew, he covered his face with his hands and shivered through every fibre of his frame.

Markley regarded him with wonder with which contempt was mingled. He curtly said:

"I will tell Kit what you say when we meet. You are sentimental about Manvers, I must say; but no doubt he would be better off in his grave than in that damp hole which is ready for him. You know my arrangements now, but it will cost money to carry them out, and you must give me a stiff cheque. It will come back to you before long, though, for Manvers's share in the firm, and the capital he put in, will all be yours—that is, what isn't mine by agreement."

A cheque was given him and he went away. Brenton sat for a long time with his head supported on his hands, thinking over his schemes for his own aggrandisement. He arose at length, and, with a half sigh, muttered:

"I wonder, as the French say, if the game is worth the candle."

CHAPTER XXII.

Mote against mote in a tourney of death,
All this mad riot we quench with a breath.

"At last I am free to look over my dear Aunt Sally's letter," exclaimed Brenton, when the house was closed for the night, and he stepped on the pavement alone, Manvers having been with him till a late hour, making such arrangements as were necessary to enable him to take entire charge of the business during his partner's absence.

Brenton knew that Mrs. Tardy could have nothing pleasant to say to him, so he deferred looking over her letter till he was quite free to consider its contents.

He stopped under the nearest lamp, tore open the envelope, and rapidly read what she had written.

His lips curled scornfully as he muttered:

"It's bad enough, but not so bad as I expected it to be. After what Emma told me, I thought the old lady would come down upon me with her wrath. Well—well—what does it signify to me, since the ancient dame is satisfied to let me off with so light a punishment as banishment from Selwood. Umph! does she suppose I would care for that? Going down there was a bore under any circumstances. I've no taste for such goody-goody people, and I am glad to cut their acquaintance."

He put the cheque carefully away in his pocket-book, and went on his way, muttering to himself:

"That Deering girl is an idiot, or she would have kept all the money. She will not be allowed to use her evidence against me, and she might as well have made something out of it. I save something by her fastidiousness, so it's all the same to me."

At the corner he took a cab and reached his hotel in time to take his wife down to tea.

He said nothing about the letter he carried in

his pocket till they were in their own parlour again.

Then throwing it to Emma, he said:

"There is something for your consideration. We are a pair of exiles from that monotonous paradise known as Salwood. I wonder if Eve did not listen to the old serpent from sheer weariness of the Eden provided for the first man and woman. I can imagine how dull it must have been after the beasts were named and the flowers admired."

While he ran on thus Mrs. Brenton hastily looked over her aunt's letter.

She crushed it in her hands and threw it violently from her, as she said:

"That girl has evidently told her all. My aunt was not certain of—of—you know what though she suspected a great deal. Miss Deering has enlightened her as to her share in our defeat, and made a merit of the part she took. She sends you back your money with the exception of what she considers a fair price for the painting I destroyed, but no doubt she expects Mrs. Tardy to more than make up the difference to her. The money will come out of our pockets at last, for my aunt's savings justly belong to me. She is only tenant for life of the estate my Uncle Henry left, and I am the true heiress."

"The law does not take that view of it, my dear, so that is all nonsense."

"Nonsense! I'd thank you, Mr. Brenton, not to tell me I talk nonsense. I won't be spoken to so disrespectfully. I know what is justice, if it isn't law, and I maintain that I have the best right to all my aunt has made from the estate that was only given to her for life. And the idea of that girl asking thirty pounds for such a daub as that I cut to pieces, is simply absurd."

"I have seen worse pictures sell for more than that," said Brenton, who seemed to be in a contradictory humour. "I was surprised to see how well it was done. You were glad to offer thirty pounds for the damage you did, and now you cavil at the retention of less than a third of that sum."

"The money was not offered as the price of the picture, and you know that as well as I do," retorted Emma, with the greenish gleam in her eyes which came into them when she was offended. "You are actually taking sides with that odious girl against me, and contradicting me as if you found pleasure in it."

"But my dear, when you state things incorrectly, it is my duty to set you right. It is absurd for you to accuse me of taking sides with a woman who is particularly odious to me, and for good reasons, as you well know. I owe a debt to Miss Deering which I would be glad to pay in my own way."

"Oh, I daresay! You will have to pay her now that she has upset all our calculations, and I hardly believe you would withhold the money, if you could. I believe you were half in love with her once, or you would not contradict me on her account."

Brenton's temper was aroused by these words, which came so near the truth, for he had admired Constance more than any woman he had ever known, and, if she had possessed wealth, he would have made more strenuous efforts to win her. He curtly said:

"Let your suspicions be what they may, you need not be coarse in expressing them, Emma."

"This—is this to me!" cried Mrs. Brenton, in a tempest of rage, and she stamped her foot vehemently upon the floor. "How dare you speak to me in such a manner! and all on account of that creature. I, who have honoured you by accepting your hand, have the right to be treated, at least, as a lady."

"Then behave like one, madame. I am not aware that I am honoured by an alliance with the daughter of a broken-down gambler who dissipated every penny of his wife's fortune that he could lay his hands on. I dare to speak the truth to my own wife, under every circumstance, and if you think that I shall pay any attention to your tantrums you are mistaken. I am not so much in love with you as to accept humiliation at your hands, and then abjectly sue for peace. If you must expend your surplus fire on some-

one, let it be on your waiting-maid, for I will not bear it myself."

Emma threw herself back on the sofa on which she was sitting, and uttered hysterical cries at intervals, too much shocked by this sudden declaration of independence to have words ready at her command.

She saw from her husband's set face that he was thoroughly in earnest, and for the first time in her life she found herself pitted against an antagonist who was quite able to cope with her.

He coolly poured out a glass of water and offered it to her, saying:

"You had better sip this slowly, and follow advice I once read which was addressed to passionate people. It was, to fill a cup with cold water and drink it at three draughts before giving utterance to their wrath. By the time the cup was exhausted, discretion would gain the ascendant, and the angry words remain unspoken."

"Wretch!" exclaimed Emma, striking the glass from his hand, and deluging his coat-sleeve and her own delicately-tinted silk with the water, "I will not hear this! I will—yes, I will separate from you. I will never consent to pass my life with a man who can treat me in this way."

"In that event you will suffer more than I, Emma, as you have by this childish outbreak. Your dress is ruined, while my coat will not be the worse for the douche it has received."

And he calmly wiped the moisture away with his handkerchief.

Emma looked at him with dilating eyes. He was perfectly cool, while she was boiling with rage, and she felt that under such circumstances the advantage must be with him. For once she was mastered, and she sulkily said:

"The dress is of little consequence. I shall never wear it again. It would only bring back the memory of this painful scene, and I shall give it to Fifine. I little thought that our first quarrel would be about a woman who should be hateful to both of us, and that I should be snubbed on her account."

"My dear Emma, do be reasonable. Miss Deering is nothing to me, and you are—my wife. We are bound together by ties that cannot be broken. Your threat just now amounts to nothing, because you will never attempt to carry it out; why, I think I need not tell you. If we are to live together in peace, you must restrain your temper, and make no attempt to treat me as your inferior. Give me the respect that is my due, and I will promise the same to you. Your interests and mine are identical, and we shall only war on our own fortunes if we live in a constant wrangle."

"You are less excitable than I am," said his wife, swallowing her wrath, and making strenuous efforts to control the outward expression of it. She felt that she was conquered; that this man was hard as steel, and that he cared too little for her to regard her caprices she perfectly understood.

So she accepted the alternative he offered, and in a choking voice managed to say:

"I understand our position, and—and—I believe you are right."

It cost her a great effort to utter these words, and Brenton, feeling master of the situation, hastened to say:

"A truce is established, then, which I venture to believe will end in a permanent peace. As an offering to the last let me present you with this cheque Mrs. Tardy sent me, and with it you can purchase the set of jewels you admire."

Brenton was shrewd enough to know that by gratifying the rapacious spirit of his wife he was paving the way to a perfect reconciliation with her, and he had no wish to live in an atmosphere of sulks and estrangement.

Her advice and co-operation in his complicated schemes were necessary to him at this time, and he was willing to purchase peace at any cost of money."

Emma raised herself, wiped her eyes, and after a pause, said, almost graciously:

"This will buy a lovely parure of turquoise and pearls, which will exactly suit my style. Thanks, dear."

"And you will look charming in them," he gallantly replied, and the clouds rolled away from her brow.

Brenton walked up and down the floor a few moments, arranging in his own mind what he had further to say to his wife, well knowing that a second storm might break over him more to be dreaded than the first.

He at length sat down beside her, took her hand in his own, and said:

"I have something important to explain to you, Emma—something that will try your temper and possibly wound your pride, but in the end I shall gain money by the failure in business which I anticipate."

She regarded him with dilating eyes and grew pale to the lips.

With a burst of hysterical tears she repeated the one word that had such dreadful meaning for her avaricious spirit:

"Failure! Did you not tell me before our marriage that your affairs were in the most prosperous condition?—that you were in a fair way to become one of the rich men of this city? If you have deceived me in this, Mr. Brenton, I will never forgive you!"

"I did not deceive you, Emma; do not get excited, but listen to what I have to say with calmness. When you understand my operations you will say that I am a shrewd, far-seeing man, who is bound to be successful. Men often gain by failing at the proper time. Can't you see what I mean?"

A look of intelligence flashed into her face, and colour came back to her cheeks and lips.

She said slowly:

"I comprehend you very well, but you have failed in business once, and a second breakdown may be fatal to your credit. You may be suspected of unfair dealing, and—and—"

"And that would certainly be bad for me," he interrupted—"but if I can throw on another the odium of the transaction—if I can ruin the man you dislike so much, by making him bear the burden of fraud and flight, will you not say to me that I have served your hatred well?"

Her face grew eager and hard in its expression, and she vindictively said:

"I will bear anything that may happen, if it involves the ruin of Julian Manvers. But how can you convict such a man of fraud, and induce him to fly from his creditors?"

"I have set a trap for him, and he will be caught in it. Don't be shocked, Emma, when I tell you the extent of my wickedness; remember that you prompted me to it, though you did not point out the way to accomplish the destruction of my partner. I shall make a good thing out of it; he will not only be sacrificed, but a handsome sum will be made out of his disappearance."

Emma impatiently said:

"What is the use of talking in this round-about way? I am not likely to be shocked at any course that involves the ruin of Mr. Manvers and the gaining of money by his fall. Explain clearly that I may understand how you intend to manage the affair."

Brenton's deep-set eyes were fixed keenly upon her, and he marvelled at the intensity of her hatred for a man whose sole offence was, that he had preferred another woman before herself. He said:

"I do not believe that you will shrink when I tell you the fate I have prepared for Manvers, so I will be perfectly open with you. I am the financial manager of the firm, and I have very lately obtained a large sum from two of the principal banks in the city. Julian is not aware of this transaction, nor will he discover it till after I am gone. I have not used that one thousand pounds for the business; I have secured it for myself, and in addition to that, I shall gain possession of all that belongs to Manvers after he is disposed of."

"That is cleverly planned," said Emma, who had no more idea of honour or honesty than a highway robber. "But how will you dispose of your partner? That is what interests me most."

"The world will believe that he has stolen this money and disappeared. Such things are

common, you know, and the turmoil made over them soon ends. When I come back to look into my affairs, I shall find sympathy and help enough, and before many months my business will go on as prosperously as ever. I have calculated everything, and made such arrangements as must defy detection."

But Julian Manvers—what will you do with him? If he is left on the face of the earth he will find means to appear again and bring you to grief."

"That is my only dread," admitted Brenton, dejectedly. "The man who undertakes to remove him to a place from which he is not likely to escape refuses to tamper with his life. Death would be far preferable to the fate that awaits him, but for the present I must bear with the obstinacy of Markley, and arrange for my permanent safety when I return from France."

"Yes, if your agent is so squeamish you can then deal with him yourself. But are you sure that he will be kept safely? I must know everything—must be satisfied that there is no danger of his reappearance while we are away. I tremble at the thought of such a possibility."

"I believe that I have guarded against every danger that can menace us in that direction. I have seen Markley this evening, and I will explain to you how our plans are to be carried out, and what is to be done with our prisoner."

Briefly and clearly he repeated to her the arrangements made between himself and his agent, and Emma listened with greedy ears, and a heart dead to every emotion of pity for the victim to be sacrificed at her command. She had never loved Manvers.

She was a woman incapable of feeling so divine a sentiment of love, but she had a fancy for him because he was handsome as a demi-god, and graceful and gracious in all his ways.

She hated him now with all the fury of a "woman spurned," and was ruthless in her determination to aid her husband in every way to crush him.

If the god of her idolatry, gold, could be won by sacrificing him, so much the better, and she gloated over the thought of the anguish of the bereaved wife at finding herself deserted, and the voice of the world raised in denunciation or the husband she adored.

(To be Continued.)

A CAUTION.

It is a very bad habit to eat orange peel. Nor is the juvenile habit of eating apples with the peel on to be recommended either. Parents who do not care as yet to correct these evil propensities will perhaps, the "Examiner" thinks, be more inclined to do so when they hear that the little black specks which may be found on the skins of oranges and apples that have been kept some time are clusters of fungi, precisely similar to those to which whooping-cough is attributed. Dr. Tschamer, of Graz, who has made the discovery, scraped some of these black specks off an orange, and introduced them into his lungs by a strong inspiration. Next day he was troubled with violent tickling in the throat, which by the end of the week had developed into an acute attack of whooping-cough.

THE SPANISH ROYAL MARRIAGE.

THE Spanish Royal marriage will be a splendid affair. The King of Spain has presented to his young bride, the Infanta Mercedes, an elegant casket manufactured in Paris. It is of lapis lazuli, mounted on four lions' claws for feet; is ten inches high and twenty long. The sides are ornamented with a profusion of wreaths of roses in gold and of all colours, and of marvellous workmanship. The key itself is a masterpiece of jewellery, and has the form of a full-blown rose with a bud. The interior is set with diamond studs. The box is destined to preserve the letters of the young couple before their marriage, but in the meantime it will con-

tain a gift of a splendid necklace of eight rows of Indian pearls from the Royal bridegroom.

The Parisian dressmakers are working night and day preparing costly robes for the bride and bridesmaids.

The world will never witness such another wedding, and if lace and jewels, and laced and embroidered garments, and many bulls butchered to make a Madrid holiday, and troops of gored horses dragging their entrails about the bull-ring, can contribute to the happiness of the Royal pair, they will be happy indeed.

CATCHING CHILDREN ALIVE!—GREAT SPORT!

A FEW evenings ago a school prize distribution meeting was presided over by Mr. Arthur Mills, the member for Exeter, who is a very active member of the London School Board. Amongst other topics, he alluded to the difficulties that beset the board owing to the ignorant prejudices of some parents, who do all they can to frustrate the Elementary Education Act by teaching children to dodge the inspectors whose duty it is to look after truants and children of a tender age who attend no school. In one of the metropolitan districts, where children were known to abound, but in which scholars were mysteriously few, Mr. Mills relates that the board were compelled to adopt a somewhat amusing stratagem.

On a certain afternoon a large force of "visitors" and "inspectors" was assembled in the vicinity, and just at the time when all the good little boys and girls were in school, two "Punch and Judys" that had been expressly engaged for the purpose were brought upon the scene in different parts of the district in question.

No sooner had the familiar squeak waked the echoes of the main street, when from court and alley came trooping out whole squadrons of children, who were, however, always invisible when the inspector made his rounds. The denouement may easily be guessed. At the moment that every little truant was engrossed with the absorbing tragedy, down swooped the inspectors and captured no less than two hundred waifs who had hitherto evaded all the wiles and arts of the board's officers.

ANALYSIS OF BUTTER FATS.

HEHNER says that all methods for detecting foreign fats in butter, which are based upon the physical properties of butter fat, such as its solubility in alcohol, ether, and naphtha, melting point, &c., are useless because it is easy to mix liquid and solid fats in such proportions as to obtain a product totally undistinguishable in its external appearance and physical properties from butter. On the other hand, many a sample of genuine butter is considered to be adulterated because its odour and appearance seem to indicate the presence of tallow. All butter without exception, even the best, by standing a long time in the air acquires a decided odour of tallow and becomes as white as tallow too.

Hehner and Angell have found that the quantity of volatile acids in butter fat is far greater than previously supposed, and further, that this quantity is very constant and almost independent of the race of the cow, the fodder, and the method of making the butter: also the age of the butter has no effect upon it. By distilling the saponified butter with sulphuric acid, they obtained in eight experiments from 4.8 to 7.5 per cent. of volatile fatty acids. In this manner no harmonious results could be obtained.

As all animal fats, except butter, consist of tristearine, tripalmitine, and trioleine, they must, when saponified and decomposed by sulphuric acid, yield from 95.28 to 95.73 per cent. fatty acids. Hog's lard, mutton suet, and similar fats yielded, by direct experiment, within

0.1 per cent., exactly 95.5 per cent. insoluble fatty acids, while pure butter gave 85.4 to 86.2, on the average 85.5 per cent.; others found as much as 87.5.

A butter, then, which yields over 88 per cent. of fatty acid can be considered as adulterated. To determine the quantity of foreign fats, subtract 87.5 from the percentage found, multiply by 100, and divide by 8 (equal 95.5—87.5). As butter is never adulterated with a few per cent. of another fat, but with at least one third, we can scarcely be in doubt whether it has been adulterated or not.

Hehner recommends to melt the butter and pour off the top through a dry filter, then put three or four grains of this fat in a small dish, add 50 c. c. alcohol and one or two grammes of pure potassium hydrate and heat five minutes, or until a few drops of water does not produce turbidity. The alcohol is driven off by evaporating to a syrup, the residue dissolved in water, dilute sulphuric or hydrochloric acid added to assist reaction. The insoluble fatty acids separate as a cheesy mass. Heat 30 minutes. Then filter on a tared, thick, moist filter, and wash with boiling water. When the filtrate ceases to show an acid reaction, the funnel is immersed in cold water to solidify the fatty acids, and dried in a weighed beaker in a water bath until the weight at two weighings is constant.

GRAPES AS FOOD.

GRAPES may deservedly claim a high rank among fruits as an article of diet. They contain, says the "Journal of Chemistry," a considerable amount of hydro-carbonaceous matter, together with potassium salts—a combination which does not tend to irritate, but on the contrary, to soothe the stomach, and which is consequently used with advantage even in dyspepsia. In the opinion of an eminent French physician, their organic acids have been much underrated. They change to carbolic acid in the blood, and, possibly, are ultimately convertible into fats.

Grapes have been found a valuable diet in fever, and the success of the "grape-cures" in the Tyrol and other parts of Europe appears to show that they are positively beneficial in other diseases. No doubt, continues our authority, the good results of a residence at these establishments are in a measure to be ascribed to the climate and the general hygienic discipline adopted.

The advantage does not wholly consist in the fact that so many pounds of grapes are eaten daily, but partly in the fact that other less healthful things are not eaten; and pure air and exercise are also important elements in the curative treatment. But after giving all due weight to these allied influences we must allow no small fraction of the beneficial results to the grapes.

HYDRANTS capable of throwing jets upon burning houses without the intervention of engines are to be fitted up throughout the City of London at a cost of over £14,000.

It takes 80,000 feet of lumber per day to run the Consolidated Virginia and California mines. One half of this goes down the old shaft and one half through the C. & C. shaft. The total requirements are 2,400,000 feet per month.

THE ORDER OF ST. MICHAEL AND ST. GEORGE.—The Queen has made the following appointments to this most distinguished Order:—To be Ordinary Members of the Second Class, or Knights Commanders: Sir Charles Gavan Duffy, Knt., Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of the Colony of Victoria; General John Jarvis Bisset, C.B.; Richard Wood, Esq., C.B., Her Majesty's Agent and Consul-General in the Regency of Tunis. To be Ordinary Members of the Third Class, or Companions of the said Order: Charles Henry Stewart, Esq., Senior Puisne Judge of the Colony of Ceylon; John Thomas Emmerson, Esq.

FORTUNE'S WHIRLIGIG.

DURING the troubles in the reign of Charles I., a country girl came to London in search of a place as a servant-maid; but, not succeeding, she hired herself to carry out beer from a brew-house, and was one of those called tub-women. The brewer, observing a good-looking girl in this low pursuit, took her into his family as a servant, and after a short time married her; but he died while she was yet a young woman, and left her the bulk of his fortune. The business of the brewery was dropped, and to the young woman was recommended Mr. Hyde, as a skilful lawyer, to arrange her husband's affairs. Hyde, who was afterwards the great Earl of Clarendon, finding the widow's fortune very considerable, married her. Of his marriage there was no other issue than a daughter, who was afterwards the wife of James II., and mother of Mary Anne, Queen of England.

THE FAIRY POT OF GOLD.

"Oh! I wish—"

"What do you wish, my dear?" said Amy's mother, as the girl stopped suddenly; "anything I can give you?"

"I'm almost ashamed, dear mamma, to tell you. You'll think me so foolish."

"Let me hear, at any rate."

"Well, dearest," and she got up, and going to her mother, kissed her; and then, hid her face on the dear shoulder, shyly. "I was thinking of a fairy story I read when a little child, and wishing I, too, could find the fairy pot of gold. Life seems so hard and dry, dear mamma; day by day, it's the same—sweeping, dusting, attending to other household affairs, with but little amusement, and hardly time to read. I get so tired of it all, sometimes; you don't know how tired."

"Yes, darling, I know all about it. I once felt exactly as you do. It was before I had learned to make the best of everything. But now I am satisfied that a Higher Power oversees all things, and that the real 'fairy pot of gold' is doing 'whatsoever the hand findeth to do,' and being content!"

"But it is so hard, when one sees other girls, who are rich, and have everything they wish for, and who—I don't think I'm wicked in saying so—haven't done anything more to deserve it than I have."

"My child, it is wicked, I'm afraid, to think so. He knows best what is good for us. Besides, there are compensations in every lot. I have no doubt the girls you envy have crosses of their own to bear; perhaps, on the whole, they are not even as happy as you, Amy. We should look at our blessings, and not at the other side of the picture."

"Oh! but," interrupted Amy, "it's so easy to talk, and so hard to—"

But she herself was interrupted; interrupted by a loud knocking at the front-door; a knocking so urgent, that Amy stopped speaking, and hurried to open it herself.

What she saw there drew all the blood to her heart, and left her pale as ashes, and clutching at the door-handle for support.

It was the form of her father, her tenderly-loved father, extended on an impromptu litter, motionless, senseless, with a face like death.

"I beg pardon, miss," said one of the bearers, "but haven't you heard? We sent Jim Haines on ahead to tell you, but he must have got the wrong directions. You see, your father was in the train coming from Great Grimsby, and there was a smash-up. Don't faint, miss. He is badly hurt, it is true, but the doctor thinks he'll get round. The doctor will be here directly."

But Amy did not hear the concluding words. She had fallen senseless across the doorway.

If there ever was a family in which love reigned paramount, it was that of the Drews. Few girls loved their parents as Amy loved hers.

Between her father and herself, especially,

there was an intellectual sympathy, as well as a sympathy of the heart.

When, therefore, she saw him brought home dead, as she thought, her whole world fell to pieces about her with a sudden and awful crash, and she was only saved from insanity by temporary forgetfulness.

That night, in her own room, when she had recovered consciousness, she prayed to the Almighty One, as only those pray who have been struck down by some great calamity, and who realise that He alone can help them.

"Oh! merciful Father," she cried, with floods of tears; "have pity and forgive! I was ungrateful, impious; I did not know how great were the blessings heaped on me. Only spare his life, give him back to us, and I will never, never, repine again!"

Her mother, not less horrified and agonised, had met the emergency with better self-control. Though lacerated in every fibre of her soul, she had retained her composure, at least, outwardly; had given directions what to do; had stood and assisted while the surgeon had performed an operation that had become necessary; and now stole in to see her daughter before the latter went to sleep for the night.

"For you must try to sleep, dearest," she said. "You will need all your strength to help me in nursing your father."

"But will he live? will he live?" sobbed Amy, wildly, clinging to her mother. "Oh! only say he will live. What will I not do, if only Heaven will spare him to us?"

"Let us hope for the best," soothingly said the mother, drying her own eyes with a great effort. "Your father has a wonderful constitution, the surgeon says, and it will probably carry him through, though the shock has been very great. Consider, darling," she said, solemnly, "how many homes are desolate to-night, made so by this accident. While others are weeping over their dead, we have hope—strong hope. There, let me smooth your pillow for you, my dearest. To-morrow, you will wake up strong, and then you shall see your father. He has just asked for you. In all his pain, he has thought of his darling Amy."

Mrs. Drew had spoken far more cheerfully than she had felt. But she knew it was necessary to buoy up her daughter, or the child, unused to trouble, would have, perhaps, lost her reason. Or, if not that, she would have gone delirious with fever.

Brave heart! she went back to her husband, and watched by him all night; moistening the hot lips; administering the soothing drinks the physician had left; smiling at him; saying words of cheer, deftly arranging the bed-clothes; doing as much by her looks and loving words, and tender assiduities, to bring back life to the shattered nerves and frame, as the doctors had done by their skill.

And this went on for weeks. After that first day Amy had rallied, and had come into the sick-room, resolute and self-contained, only second indeed to her mother in courage and skill. Together those two devoted women fought with Death for their loved one.

"Never have I seen such nursing," said the physician. "If he lives, it will be the nursing that saves him, rather than my medicines. Heaven bless mother and daughter. Such women make us think of the angels."

The battle at last was won. Mr. Drew rose from his bed at the end of months, crippled for life; but, in all other respects, as strong and healthy as before his accident.

And when he went out, for the first time, with Amy and her mother, one on either side, supporting his feeble steps, and when everybody stopped to speak to him, and even people they had scarcely known before, came up and shook him by the hands, including the Lord-Lieutenant himself, then it was that Amy's heart rose in her throat, and the tears welled up into her eyes, and she murmured to herself:

"Oh, thank Heaven, thank Heaven! for here my darling father is well at last, when I see those go by, in mourning, whose loved ones were killed in the same train. Can I be too thankful?"

A great change has come over Amy. The waters of tribulation have washed her soul white. She has found content. You see it even in her face, which, though beautiful before, has won a spiritual loveliness that it lacked in earlier days.

She no longer repines at her lot. On the contrary, she sees how blessed it is, in many respects, and how, though not without troubles, the blessings outnumber them, as they do with all of us, if we could only behold things aright.

"What makes you so unusually cheerful, lately, my dear child?" said her father to her, one morning at breakfast; "you go singing about the house all day."

"It is because I have come into a great inheritance, lately, and I can't keep still for joy. Yes! dear papa," kissing him, "ma will tell you all about it. She will tell you I have found 'The Fairy Pot of Gold.'"

H. B. T.

REARING TURKEYS.

THERE are many complaints in this neighbourhood (Breconshire) about the difficulty of rearing turkeys, and many and various are the plans adopted in feeding their young. The common practice of giving bread is very objectionable, though soaked in milk. Curds and hard-boiled eggs are the best possible for turkey poulties, and it should be given to them very early in the morning, and of course they are fed by hand. There is an absurd notion that if two or three hens' eggs are hatched with the poulties the young chickens will teach them to eat, an idea for which there is no foundation.

Those who mean to be successful in rearing turkeys must submit to a little trouble at first, or the attempt will be a failure. It will not answer to put too many eggs under one turkey, and as soon as they are hatched the poulties should have a peppercorn or two put down their throats, and be kept as warm as possible, and not allowed to be out if it is the least wet or damp for the first month; and if due care is taken during that period, the brood will look out for themselves afterwards, and rarely come to grief.

This treatment is rather less artificial than the singular methods adopted in the countries from whence the chief supply of geese is drawn, where young children are frequently detained from school or work, that they may lie in bed by turns for the sole purpose of watching goose eggs placed there with them.

THE SHAH OF PERSIA.

It is generally believed that the Shah will travel to Europe by the way of the Caucasus and the Vladi-Caucasus direct to Berlin, without visiting St. Petersburg. He proposes to pass a month at some of the German spas, and another month in France, where he will go to some of the principal cities. He will then visit England, Spain, Italy, and Austria, returning home through the Persian Gulf, after having travelled through Egypt and made a pilgrimage to Mecca. The principal object of his journey is to ascertain for himself more in detail than he could do when he made his first visit to Europe, the industrial condition of that Continent, with a view to apply what he considers useful to his own country.

POISONOUS WALL-PAPERS.

A LECTURE ON "Poisonous Wall-papers" was delivered a short time back before the Manchester Chemists' and Druggists' Association by Mr. L. Siebold. The lecturer stated that out of sixty or seventy papers of various colours blue, red, brown, pink, &c., analysed by him, ten only were harmless, the rest containing arsenic. There is a popular impression that green papers only are to be feared; but the result of Mr. Siebold's examination should have the effect of rendering householders and heads of families suspicious of some of the most innocent-looking colours. It is reasonable to assume that to the

presence of deleterious ingredients contained in certain wall-papers may be ascribed many little illnesses of children where no apparent cause exists for the same, and which sometimes puzzle the medical attendant.

A FLEXIBLE SILK HAT.

THIS is the invention of Herr Carl Bortfeldt, and is the result of many years of labour and study. Having the appearance of an ordinary silk hat, it combines the softness and peculiar comfort of a felt hat, and is, besides, both lighter and more durable than the high hats in common use. It has been named by the inventor after Prince Bismarck, who writes of it, "Your hat has reconciled me to an old enemy." The body is composed of a very finely constructed felt, the patented proofing of which makes it more durable than a heavier hat of the common type. It is perfectly flexible, particularly soft and easy to the wearer, is unaffected by the weather, less liable to serious damage by accident, and is capable of the very highest finish.

THE LOVE PACT.

CHAPTER XXV.

The man that lays his hand upon a woman, Save in the way of kindness, is a wretch Whom 'twere gross malice to name a coward.
JOHN TOBY.

THE next day, being the Christmas festival, did not offer Hugh the opportunity of a conference with his father which he desired.

He was merely able to send a messenger with inquiries after Robert's health, and a tender little epistle to Eugénie.

On the following day the earl claimed his son's attendance with him at the assize town relative to the punishment of the rioters.

Kesterton had excused himself from accompanying them on the p'ea of ill-health.

He was aware that Lucy Adeline and her mother proposed driving out in one of the Mostyn carriages and hoped to accompany them.

To his surprise neither of the Ladies Vavasour solicited his escort.

After their departure he stood for some time chewing the cud of bitter reflections, then, tired of his own thoughts, called for his horse and started to visit the pits and see how Robert Wilmer was getting on.

As he reached the door of the engineer's cottage, after securing his cob, Eugénie came out.

Kesterton had never met her before, and the bright beauty of the girl, heightened, unknown to herself, by a *c'er* in feeling of happy love, struck the libertine strongly.

Besetting an insolent stare on her lovely face, Kesterton said, in a tone which well fitted with the look:

"My dear, I wish to see Robert Wilmer."

The girl knew sufficient of the manners of both her own and her adopted country to be aware that the term of endearment, thus used, was an insult.

She made no direct reply therefore, but with a flash of her dark eyes called back into the house:

"Ma mère, a gen—someone wishes to see Robert."

Then she sped on her way.

Mrs. Wilmer came to the door and invited Kesterton, whom she knew, to come in.

Robert, looking still very pale and weak, was sitting in an old-fashioned, high-backed chair by the fire-side.

The visitor took a seat opposite, and, avoiding Robert's eye, said:

"Well, Wilmer, how are you getting on, my good fellow?"

"I am much better," the engineer replied, coldly

"Ah, it's a deuced good thing that that relative of mine got you down. I'd have done it for you, you know, only I thought you were dead."

The Yorkshireman merely inclined his head.

It was evident that he had no desire for conversation with his visitor.

Kesterton remained silent for some minutes, tapping meanwhile his riding-boots with the jaunty whip which he held.

"An uncommonly pretty girl been to see you, Wilmer. Deuced handsome girl. Who is she?"

The tone and words jarred on Robert.

"My sister, sir," he responded.

"Your sister! Oh, nonsense, my good fellow. She's a French girl. Heard her speak French to your mother."

"Mr. Kesterton," interposed Mrs. Wilmer, with some dignity, "she is my adopted daughter."

"Hem! Well, she's got a face that ought to be a fortune to a poor girl."

Robert Wilmer's strong right hand grasped the stout oaken arm of his chair as though he would break it to atoms, but he restrained the words which sprang to his lips.

"Wilmer," resumed Kesterton, "the Earl of Thanet has gone to see about those captured rioters. They'll get it pretty warm, I can tell you. I hope you are not in it."

Still no reply.

"They'll find it wasn't a good thing to make an enemy of me."

"One man has found that out already, sir," said Robert, suddenly, in a deep, hoarse tone.

Rupert Kesterton looked up and met the young man's eye.

He read it all. Robert Wilmer had seen and remembered the deed which made him a murderer.

With a muttered imprecation Rupert arose and, bestowing the curtest of farewells on mother and son, left the house, and springing into his saddle, rode off at a smart trot.

"He does know then! He remembers all! Well, it can't be proved. And it was in self-defence—it was in self-defence."

He shrieked out the last two words as if in answer to a visible accuser.

Robert Wilmer glanced out of the window at the departing figure of his late visitor as he rode off at a smart trot.

"I've made an enemy," he thought, "or rather I have turned a man who had for some reason taken a dislike to me into an irreconcileable foe. This Mr. Kesterton has not forgotten that I saw what passed on the blazing roof—he is fully aware that I hold the secret of his crime. True, he knows that I can never accuse him of it, for where would be my witness, and how far would the bare assertion of a working man weigh against his denial? No, no. Upon that point he is perfectly assured of security. But he hates me because I know this thing, and, although I despise the man too much to entertain aught of fear of him, it will be well to be on my guard or I may share the fate of James Meers."

"Robert," said the old dame, breaking in upon her son's reverie, "'tis hard to think that overbearing, masterful man who has left but now is kith and kin o' so true a gentleman as the captain."

"Ay, ay, mother," responded the young man, "but the same tree may bear different grafts, you know—it may have rosy-cheeked pippins and sour crabs, all taking their nurture from the one good stock."

The old lady nodded and took up her knitting.

A somewhat rough knoek sounded on the door and Mrs. Wilmer rose to open it, disclosing the figures of three of the miners at the threshold. Entering the room, their spokesman, after hearty inquiries, informed Robert that they wished him to negotiate with Lord Thanet on their behalf as a deputation from the great body of the men for the re-opening of the pits at the old rate of wage.

"We don't mind now, Mr. Wilmer," the man continued, "that Captain Mostyn has come back, for he's a right good sort; and if there's any chance o' a rise of wage he'll see we get it. But it was hopeless while that our Kesterton was in power. He's good at grinding the faces o' the poor and that's all he is good for. Well, you'll do your heat for us, sir, for you too—if you won't mind my saying so—are true as steel and we can depend on you."

Robert promised his good offices as their messenger readily, and with a cordial farewell the men trooped out.

Meanwhile after a half-mile's frantic gallop, at a sharp turning of the road, which the bitter east wind had cleared of snow since Christmas Eve, Kesterton saw coming towards him the figure of Eugénie.

As she drew nearer Kesterton thought she looked, in a quaint, tasteful dress, half-Norman, half-English, one of the most bewitching girls he had ever met.

"Ah, I like these shy ones," he muttered. "I'll have some fun with the girl. It'll help to drive away these uncomfortable thoughts."

Just before he reached her he sprang from his horse, threw the bridle-reins over an adjacent gate and stood directly in Eugénie's path.

The girl read some purpose of insult in his bold stare, and stepped nearer to the hedge in order to pass him.

He intercepted her passage.

Eugénie sprang to the other side of the road, but only to find Kesterton too quick for her purpose of evasion.

The high spirit of the girl conflicted with her fear as she said, in an agitated voice:

"Please let me pass, sir. I am in haste to reach home."

"Not yet, my darling. I want a little talk with you—perhaps a kiss or two. One doesn't meet lips so worthy to be kissed every day."

Thoroughly terrified at the address, she made another effort to pass.

He was too quick for her, however. By a sudden movement he threw his arm around the girl's slender form and pressed his lips to her cheek passionately.

By a supreme effort of strength Eugénie thrust him from her, Kesterton's foot slipping on the frozen herbage which bordered the road and himself falling on one knee.

The schemer possessed none of that chivalry which leads most men to respect a woman irrespective of her rank or station.

He sprang up and with a bitter imprecation struck full at the girl with his riding-whip.

The small, supple switch alighted on Eugénie's fair brow, leaving a long red trace.

In mortal terror and half blinded by pain, the girl fled swiftly along the homeward road. But her foe was on her track.

Kesterton was no athlete and he was terribly encumbered by his heavy riding-boots, while Eugénie was swift of foot, as becomes a Norman paysanne.

Still the chances were against the pursued, and, as she glanced back over her shoulder, she saw with a sinking heart that the distance between herself and her assailant was growing gradually less and less!

CHAPTER XXVI.

And now thou know'st thy father's will:

All that thy sex hath need to know:

'Twas mine to teach obedience still—

The way to love thy lord may show. BYRON.

As the piercing shrieks of the marchioness rang in his ears the madness which had controlled the marquis left him suddenly and a sensation of awful fear smote the old man's heart.

"For the love of Heaven cease these terrible cries, Cécile!" he said, imploringly, to his wife, then, bending over the pale face of his daughter, he continued, pitifully: "Oh, Hélène, ma fille! look at me, thy father! Speak to me and say I am not the slayer of one I love so well!"

"Monsieur le Marquis," said the priest, taking the old man's arm gently, "leave the young lady to her mother's ministrations. See!

her breath comes more strongly. She will revive presently. Ah! that is right!"

This latter was said as Georges Grandet presented a Sèvres vase which he had hastily caught up and brought filled with water.

The old priest sprinkled the cool fluid over Hélène's face, and with a sobbing sigh her eyes opened with a frightened look and fixed themselves on the face of the marchioness that was bending over her. The marquis and Georges drew back until she should become more herself.

"Ma mère," said the girl, her eyes rolling with a wild look at the sable paraphernalia of death, "did you call Eugénie?"

"My child," cried the marchioness, with a sudden terror, "what do you ask?"

"Did you call Eugénie ere I—I fainted?"

"Yes, my daughter," said the marchioness, violently agitated. "Why do you ask?"

"You knew her—loved her?"

"What may this mean, Hélène? What do you know?"

Urged by an overpowering impulse the marquis, still unseen, drew near with ashy pale face, Georges watching the old man vigilantly the while after his first fear for Hélène had passed.

"Take them away!" the girl continued, feebly, waving her hand toward the mimic bier. "I knew not whom you mourned, ma mère. Eugénie lives!"

"Lives, Hélène! You rave. What can you know?"

"She lives, ma mère!"

The marquis could control himself no longer. He sprang forward and, seizing his daughter's hand in violent agitation, essayed to speak.

"Hélène—"

But ere another word could be added the girl turned from him and hid her face in her mother's bosom while strong shivers ran through her slight frame.

"Hélène, my daughter!"

"Monsieur le Marquis," interposed the priest, "be merciful. It were more needful that mademoiselle should have the aid of a physician, the careful attention of a tender mother, than that, after the scene she has passed through, you, her father, who have treated her so urgently, should urge your cruelty still farther."

The old soldier's proud face flushed crimson at the rebuke and he glared fiercely at his adviser. But stern as was his look, it met one of courage no less indomitable from the meek churchman.

There was an air of menace in the old noble's attitude which the priest at once understood.

"Stop, Monsieur le Marquis!" he said, coldly. "Do not dishonour your manhood by striking one who cannot resist, as you struck but now a helpless woman. Think better of it, monsieur.

Think better too of the bitter passion which you have just now shown towards this young man," and he laid his hand lightly on Georges' shoulder.

"You are not a happy man, nor is this stately pile a happy home. What evil memories, what unforgiven sin your soul hides I know not nor desire to know. But take this counsel even from the despised wearer of the soutane: Do no further ill, or the clouds which shall gather round your closing years will be yet blacker than those which now lower over the D'Aubron house.

That you have pursued an evil purpose for years I know, though I know not what the ill consists in. Repent! Let the tears and prayers to Heaven of that meek, long-suffering woman be at last answered. Undo if it be yet possible the unrighteousness thou hast wrought."

By a great effort the old noble preserved the look of invincible pride which sat upon his features to the end of this address. His tone was calm and softer as he replied:

"Father François, I thank you. I heed little of priests, who are caterpillars eating what they have not sown; but you at least deserve the respect due to courage. Neither, it would seem, have you endeavoured traitorously to pry into the secrets of an ancient house which has sheltered you often. Again I thank you, and will take your advice so far as to leave my wife and daughter until they have regained some calmness, when I have questions which must

be answered. For you, Georges Grandet, I will also relinquish that purpose of avenging my wounded honour with which I came hither. But—reptile, traitor that you are—you and I can never again sleep beneath the same roof-tree. Take leave of your aunt and cousin, and quit the château within an hour—for ever!"

Hélène grasped her mother's hand with a convulsive clasp.

"It is useless, Cécile," said the marquis, coldly, in reply to an appealing look from his wife. "On this point my resolution is inflexible."

In a few quiet, well-chosen words the Parisian made his adieux to his aunt, down whose worn face the tears flowed freely, then, taking his cousin's hand, he said, rapidly in Italian, of which language he knew his uncle to be ignorant:

"Be true and firm, Hélène and we shall conquer. Tell to none what you have learned of her supposed to be dead."

He suppressed the name "Eugénie" that his uncle might have no clue to his meaning.

The marquis seized Georges angrily by the arm and tore him away, but it was evident that the girl understood the warning.

"Traitor to the last!" the marquis cried, "who dares not speak his venom or wickedness in plain words! Degenerate scion of a noble race, begone ere I forget my promise! Out of my sight!"

With a cool and ceremonious bow and a polite farewell to the exasperated man, who took no notice of the dandy's proffered hand, Georges left the room with his usual airy and careless grace.

Nor did the Parisian's nonchalance leave him whom he had quitted the presence of his uncle. On the contrary, his spirits seemed to rise under the adverse circumstances which environed him.

He repaired at once to his own rooms and commenced to pack his portmanteaux.

As he leisurely and carefully stowed away his clothes and the numerous articles of bijouterie which form the treasures of a Frenchman of good society he hummed gaily a joyous air from the last opera of Auber.

When all was finished he descended and proceeded himself to the stables, giving orders for the carriages to be prepared immediately.

Returning to his rooms, he encountered Hélène's maid, Lucille.

The soprano had a certain admiration for the dandy for his dégagé and dashing manner, and in addition had an inkling of the tie which existed between Georges and her mistress.

A few words of adroit flattery, and—sad to say—a few kisses, easily induced Lucille to undertake the charge of a dainty, scented billet which Georges wished transmitted to his cousin.

Then with the same air of imperturbable good temper Georges saw his luggage deposited in the carriage, took his place therein, and was speedily whirled away towards the railway station.

Paris had been the bourne to which the young man intended to proceed, with an idea of finding out Madame Christine, his object in seeking her being to learn if possible what was the tie connecting the Marquis D'Aubron to Eugénie.

His motives in this quest were twofold. He had a vivid interest in the girl herself, though he had never seen her face. For Georges's interview with Hugh Mostyn had assured the Parisian that the Englishman was not likely to love with an overpowering passion any commonplace countrywoman.

Neither did he doubt that when Captain Mostyn received his letter he would leave no stone unturned to find Eugénie. Upon his success in this search and his constancy the happiness of Georges and Hélène alone rested.

Beyond this the agitation of his uncle only that very day at the mention of Eugénie's name proved clearly that any discovery Georges might make would give him power over the old noble. The further fact that the emotion which the marchioness displayed at learning that the mysterious country girl was still living indicated that she as well as her husband was cognizant

of the secret connected with Eugénie, whatever that secret might be.

Upon mature consideration, however, Georges decided that it would be necessary to discover, before pursuing his researches at Paris, whether the old woman had returned to her village home. At least he might gain some valuable information from the pretty daughter of the village innkeeper.

Thither he would first proceed.

In one material respect Georges was aware he stood well for contending with whatever difficulties or adversary he might have to encounter.

He was abundantly provided with the sinews of war. As his uncle had of late lost immense sums by speculations on the Bourse the young man had been correspondingly fortunate.

Whether the good luck which proverbially attends those who are careless of it had been his, or whether, on the other hand, the dandy's indifference and listless look but masked an acute and scheming brain cannot be decided, but the fact remained that for a long period he had been winning on every transaction in a marvellous manner, at which the agents stood aghast; and as Georges glanced over the neat memoranda in his pocket-book as he leaned back in the carriage he murmured, with a complacent smile:

"A few more ventures and I can buy the old château itself. Fancy, too, to outwit Cochart on his own ground."

The last-named personage, however, who was now also about to leave the château for his journey to England, seemed equally well pleased with the state of affairs.

"I hold them all in my hand," he chuckled as he made his few preparations for departure. "La belle Hélène shall be mine—the broad estates shall be mine! Are they not already so almost? The old man may fret and fume, but he'll have to humble himself low enough before Jacques Cochart ere the leaves once again clothe those sear branches outside."

As the afternoon passed on the marquis desired an interview with his wife and daughter severally.

He found the former in her boudoir. The black hangings, the mimicry of death, had been removed and new-sprung hope lent some brightness to the marchioness's sad eyes and gave a hectic hue to her hollow cheeks.

"Cécile," began the marquis, abruptly, "I have a few words to say before I summon Hélène to my presence. I have something of pardon to beg of you in that I deceived you regarding the death of her who must be here ever nameless. Forgive me that, in pity to thy sad heart, I abstained from telling the evil tidings. From thy face and by this changed chamber I see that thou hast taken comfort, Cécile. Dost thou believe she still lives?"

"I do."

"Upon the assurance of Hélène?"

"Yes, my husband."

"What more of this terrible secret does the girl know?"

"I cannot say, Edouard, but I think she knows only that."

"She does not know where—she who is dead is?"

"No, assuredly not."

"From whom did Hélène obtain the knowledge?"

"I know not, my husband."

"Did you attempt to learn, Cécile?"

"I did, Edouard, but she was inflexible. She would answer nothing."

"Me at least she shall answer," said the marquis as he rose from his chair. "Send her to me in the library."

The marchioness also rose, and laying her thin hand on the old man's arm, said:

"Be merciful, monsieur. She is our daughter."

"She must obey my will."

"Remember, my husband, that it is from you that she inherits that indomitable spirit which may break but will never bend."

"I am a man, Cécile, and her father. She is a girl and my child. It is her duty to obey and she shall do it."



[A DASTARDLY ACT.]

With this unpromising announcement the old man left the room.

In a very brief space Hélène joined her father. He looked at her with a curious and disturbed expression as he indicated a chair, on which the girl listlessly seated herself.

Her beautiful face was marily pale and a dark red line showed in strong relief upon her white brow. Her large dark eyes were intensely calm, however, and her exquisitely cut mouth set with a hard expression which took somewhat from its symmetry.

"Hélène," the marquis began, in a slow, measured manner, "I regret that you, the petted child of my manhood's years—you around whom the hopes of my old age twine—should so far have forgotten your duty to me as notonly to thwart my wishes but to degrade yourself unutterably."

"It is for you, Monsieur le Marquis," replied the girl, in a cold, calm tone, "that you, a gentleman and a soldier, have foully wronged a woman and that woman your own daughter—first by a blow and then by an aspersion which strikes still more heavily. For me—what is my transgression?"

"What! Have not you, the daughter of a noble house, the betrothed—almost the bride of one long destined for you, have you not held assignations with that wretched apology for a man whom I have been compelled to forbid my house for ever?"

"I have not."

"You have not met Georges Grandet alone and in secret?"

"Once—when it concerned the welfare of others. The other meetings were not sought by me."

"The welfare of others! who are they?"

"That is not my secret, monsieur."

"Ah, that brings me to the second charge. You know a secret—truly not your secret, you spoke words to-day which leave no doubt of it—yon mentioned a name—"

He paused

"That of Eugénie."

"What know you of her?"

"Nothing, Monsieur le Marquis—nothing, that is to say, which may be revealed."

"Not to me?"

"Not even to you, my father."

A storm of gathering passion spread over the old noble's brow as he gazed sternly at his daughter's pallid face, still set in its rigid resolve.

"What you know was learned from whom?"

"I may not tell you, monsieur."

"There can be but two persons—your mother and Father François."

"My lips are sealed, monsieur. Yet, stay, lest your anger should alight on the innocent, I will say it was neither of these!"

"True. They could not have known what you stated. Is that true?"

"It is true."

"You swear it."

Hélène assented.

"Was your informant then one of our neighbouring noblesse—or—ah!—was it Georges Grandet—or—Heavens!—Cochart?"

"It is useless to persist in inquiring, monsieur."

The marquis rose and paced the room with hasty steps.

"No, it cannot be," he thought. "I am well assured that neither my nephew nor the notary quitted the château on the day when I visited the post-office."

"Hélène," said the marquis, with stern emphasis, as he stopped before his daughter, "I require three things of you. First give me your promise—an easy promise for you who in one short month will be a happy wife—never to think again of your unworthy cousin!"

The girl slipped down from her chair and, falling upon her knees, seized the old man's hand in a tender clasp.

"Oh, my father!" she cried, the hard expression fleeing from her upturned countenance, which glowed instead with a look of filial love, "have pity on me. Banish the dark, cold shadow which has risen between us like an icy wall. You have spoken of your affection for me—oh, let me know it once more! And I, my

father, even I, have I not loved thee very dearly with the truest love of a devoted child? How I have rejoiced in your noble deeds—how proud I have been of your fame among men! I have hung upon your words, I have anticipated your lightest wish. Nay, but a few short months since I would have gone with at least resignation to the altar to plight my life-vows to Captain Mostyn. But Heaven itself stayed our nuptials. Then in that space of reprieve I looked into my own heart and knew that I should not have strength to make the sacrifice in the coming time. It would blight my life, it would darken his. Oh, father! break this ill-omened pact. I will myself, if need be, beg your honourable release of Lord Thanet on my bended knees! Be merciful! be pitiful!"

Her passionate tones faltered and her dark eyes became suffused with heavy tear-drops.

No slightest change of the old man's stern lineaments responded to the appeal.

"This is folly. I repeat that I demand three things of thee. First thy promise to give no thought to the traitor Georges Grandet. Next to tell me all thou knowest of her whom thou hast called Eugénie. And, lastly, to give me thy informant's name. Do these and I am again thy loving father—thou my cherished, beloved child."

The girl rose and dried her tears with a slow, apathetic look.

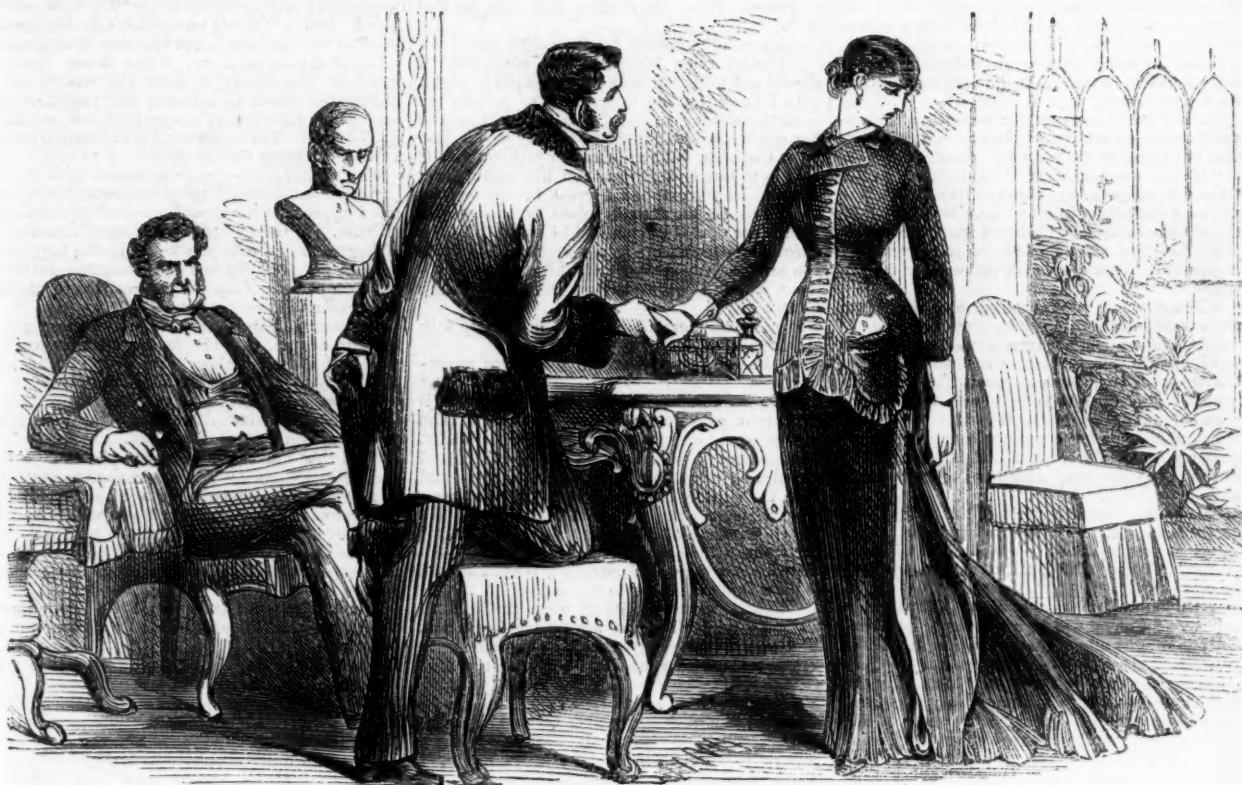
"I can answer none," she said.

"You will not?" cried the marquis, threateningly.

"If you prefer it, monsieur, I will not!"

"Hence to your apartments, minion!" the old man cried, vehemently. "Ungrateful harpy who tearst the breast that loved thee—disgrace to thy lineage—away! Until the hour when thou art vested in thy bridal robes thou shalt not pass thy chamber's threshold! Thou shalt hold no communion with mother, with confessor or friend! I—or one whom I may appoint—shall be thy gaoler, and thou shalt water scant meals with sorrowful and solitary tears."

(To be Continued.)



[THE HEART BOWED DOWN.]

THE
LORD OF STRATHMERE;
OR,
THE HIDDEN CRIME.

CHAPTER VI.

Heart of my heart, soul of my soul,
Wherever I may be,
True as the magnet to the pole
Is my true heart to thee.

It was the evening of the day upon which occurred Miss Pelham's visit to her lover in gaol.

Pelham Wold was brilliantly lighted. The night was cold and dark, with a bitter wind, and now and then a gust of snow.

The great mansion, set in a wide and ancient park, and upon an eminence, with its wide windows streaming with light, looked like some great and splendid jewel.

In its grand drawing-room were gathered all the luxuries, comforts and delights known to our higher-class life.

The great chandeliers were filled with wax candles, many of them burning. Under the low marble mantelpieces of exquisite sculpture blazed sea-coal fires. Warmth, light and perfume made the long room delightful.

The owner of Pelham Wold, the wealthy banker of Lombard Street, was pacing the floor in a thoughtful and discontented mood. His rosy face wore a heavy frown.

His usual air of bonhomie had given place to anxiety and a look of trouble. He was seriously anxious about his daughter.

She was not only his idol, nearer and dearest to him than anything on earth, but she was the heiress of all his wealth, the future mistress of Pelham Wold; his pride and his hopes were alike bound up in her.

Hitherto she had been as obedient as a little child, never questioning his will, thinking even as he thought; but now, although loving and obedient still, he felt that she was changed. The state of her health, too, made him very uneasy.

Her long illness had left her weak and fragile, and only the day before the family physician had prescribed for her change of air and scene, and earnestly recommended for her a journey abroad.

"Her mother died of consumption," thought Mr. Pelham, "and the child is very like her mother. I will take her abroad. A change of scene will restore her to health, and in time cause her to forget her unfortunate love affair," and he sighed deeply.

He was still walking to and fro when a carriage drove into the port-cochère. A moment later, the powdered footman flung open the door of the drawing-room, announcing:

"Lord Strathmere!"

The banker started at the sound of that name and halted, as Norman Brabazon, now Baron Strathmere, entered his presence. Recovering himself, he came forward with outstretched hand to welcome his visitor.

The new master of Strathmere Park was dressed in the deepest mourning. His swarthy, hypocritical visage was smooth as ever, but downcast and sorrowful.

His small black eyes looked furtively from the corners of their sockets. No traces of his hideous crime were visible in his gentle bearing. A plausible smile lurked as usual about his thin lips.

He carried himself somewhat more importantly than formerly; there was at times a new arrogance in his manner, but he had not forgotten the fascinations that had distinguished him, and which had been of so much service to him in his social and political career.

He grasped the banker's hand in a warm and lingering clasp, and returned his friendly salutations.

"This is an unexpected pleasure, Baron," said

Mr. Pelham, the title coming quite natural to his lips. "This is a bad night outside, and I appreciate your visit. Be seated."

He wheeled an arm-chair to the hearth, and the new lord of Strathmere sank into it and stretched out his thin hands to the ruddy blaze.

The banker drew another seat conveniently near and took possession of it.

Lord Strathmere looked about the room expectantly.

"I called this evening in the hope of seeing Miss Pelham also," he explained. "I heard that she was out driving to-day. I am glad that she is so far recovered from her long and terrible illness. My man, whom I have sent every day with inquiries, has always brought me very discouraging reports. Until this evening I have not been able to make my inquiries personally."

"I will let Gerda know that you are here," said Mr. Pelham, reaching for the bell-pull.

The visitor frustrated the movement by a gesture.

"Not yet," he said. "I have something to say to you first, Mr. Pelham."

He continued to warm his hands, and seemed to find some difficulty in commencing his communication. After a brief silence the banker remarked:

"You told me when I called upon you recently, Baron, that you had received your appointment as Governor-General of Australia. Have you decided to accept it?"

"I have already sent in my acceptance," replied Lord Strathmere. "Of course, the appointment is no longer necessary to me. The present state of my affairs renders it of comparatively little value to me. By a singular and horrible fatality I find myself at an early age—I am but forty-three—the possessor of a lofty title and of one of the richest estates in Great Britain. My income surpasses that of a royal prince. My home is a palace. Yet I find that my ambition is not smothered under my new grandeur. I should like the exercise of authority as Governor-General of Australia."

More than that, the unhappy occurrences which have so altered my circumstance have rendered England temporarily distasteful to me. I desire a change of scene, a thorough, radical change. I have decided, therefore, to go out to Australia for a year or two."

He had other reasons for accepting the appointment—reasons pertaining to Ralph Chandos, but these he did not choose to divulge.

"If you are ambitious," said Mr. Pelham, "there is scarcely any height politically to which you may not attain in England. But I suppose the change of scene will be of great benefit to you, after the recent shock of your great bereavement. How soon shall you sail for the Antipodes?"

"The government advertised a month since for a transport ship to take out the batch of convicts now awaiting transportation," replied Lord Strathmere. "I received notice to-day that a vessel had been secured, the 'Clytemnestra,' which has been employed for the purpose before, and she will sail in a fortnight. It is not customary for convict transports to carry passengers, I believe, but I have arranged to sail in the 'Clytemnestra,' which has very fine cabin accommodations."

The banker looked surprised. A sudden idea occurred to him.

"If the convicts are sent out in the same vessel," he remarked, "Chandos will undoubtedly be on board."

"Undoubtedly," said Lord Strathmere, calmly. "But he will be a prisoner, and I shall not be brought into contact with him during the voyage. I shall not have another so good opportunity for making the voyage in months, and I cannot allow a false sentimentality to prevent my making use of this. Of course my cousin's disgrace and punishment are a heavy affliction to me, and I do not mind confessing to you, Mr. Pelham, that one reason for my leaving England at this time is that I may be absent until the horror of my uncle's death and the disgrace of my cousin's punishment shall be in a measure forgotten, or replaced by some newer sensation."

"I know how you must feel, Baron," said the banker, sympathetically. "I quite understand your desire to absent yourself from England for a year or two."

"How does Miss Pelham bear Chandos's sentence?" asked Lord Strathmere, abruptly.

"It was the announcement of it that made her ill. She has been very near death, and her recovery seems to me a miracle. Yesterday she sat up an hour. To-day she visited Chandos in gaol."

Lord Strathmere's brow contracted. A red spark glowed in his black eyes which he averted from his host.

"You allowed her to visit him?" he asked, hoarsely.

"How could I help it?" demanded the banker. "She has been at death's door. She sent for me this morning, and when I went to her room she was dressed for her ride. She begged and entreated me to take her to Chandos. At first I refused, but she clung to me and wept and coaxed—she is my only child, Baron, and I had to give in to her at last. She only wanted to bid him a last farewell. I ordered the carriage and took her to Lewes. I easily obtained an order for her to see Chandos, and she had an interview with him. She came out of the cell in an almost fainting condition. I brought her home and she went to bed. Just before you came in she sent me word that she would come down to me in the drawing-room for a few minutes this evening. Poor child! Even in her sorrow for Chandos she does not forget her love for her father."

"Did you see him?" inquired the baron, huskily.

"Chandos? No. He murdered his uncle; he has made shipwreck of my child's happiness. See him? I could not do it, Baron. And why should I see him? I would never have dreamed that he could turn out a murderer. He was so bright, so gay, so frank. He seemed so noble, so true. I used to think that if I had had a son I should have wished him to be like Ralph

Chandos. What hypocrites there are in this world!"

"Ah, yes!" assented Lord Strathmere.

"The interview was very hard for Gerda. I should not think her able to come down to-night, only I know that she is anxious to relieve my anxieties about her, and that she will husband her small store of strength for my sake. She loves Chandos, but she loves her father too. If I were to lose her, Baron, my life would be a desert. I have planned a great future for her. It is hard to have one's plans frustrated like this. The doctor tells me that I must take her abroad, or she will go into a decline. So, while you are enjoying power and influence in Australia we shall be journeying slowly about the Continent."

Lord Strathmere's dark visage lighted up with a sudden glow.

He leaned forward eagerly, his eyes sparkling.

"My dear Pelham," he exclaimed, "what is to prevent your going out to Australia? The voyage would completely restore Miss Pelham. The change of scene would be thorough and beneficial. Say you will go. I beg you and Miss Pelham to become my guests at Government House for the next year."

The banker looked aghast.

"I never thought of such a thing!" he declared. "A voyage to Australia! Why, I should as soon think of going to the moon!"

"Yet the more you reflect upon it the more you will be inclined to accept my invitation. The voyage is precisely what Miss Pelham needs. You can leave your business for a year or two years—"

"I can do that, certainly. My affairs can be arranged in a week so that I could well be absent two years," acknowledged the banker. "But a voyage to the Antipodes! Really, Baron, I thank you, but the project does not seem to me altogether advisable. She would see Chandos on the ship—"

"But chained to felons, himself a felon. The sight of him, as she would see him, would inspire her with contempt for him. No woman of self-respect, no lady with Miss Pelham's beauty and position in life, would cling to a man who has become an object of general contempt."

The banker shook his head.

"It's hard understanding women," he said. "I should think as you do, but women are peculiar beings. She would pity him—"

"With a contemptuous pity, Mr. Pelham," interrupted Lord Strathmere. "I know she would despise him, and blush for herself because she once loved him. Believe me, such a voyage would cure her love as well as her failing health."

The banker looked half-convinced. It would be a pleasant thing, he reflected, and gratifying to his pride to be a guest at Government House, Sidney.

And perhaps the long sea voyage might, as the baron said, cure Gerda both of her love for Chandos and her ill-health.

Lord Strathmere saw and pursued his advantage.

He knew well the weak points of the banker's character, his love of rank, his ardent desire to ally himself, through his daughter, with a person of title.

He comprehended that, mingled with his horror at Chandos's supposed crime, was a keen and bitter disappointment that Gerda's expectations of marrying the heir to a title should be frustrated.

"My dear Pelham," he said, gently, "I have a confession to make to you which I once believed could never pass my lips. When I was only Norman Brabazon, whatever my political success, whatever my social standing, I could not think of marriage. I had no money with which to keep a wife and an establishment. Of course I could marry. With my position and connections I should not have found it difficult to marry a young, beautiful and richly-dowered lady, but my heart became fixed upon one, and my cousin loved her. He was the heir to the Strathmere title and estates: he was young and

handsome; how could I enter the lists with him? But he proved unworthy, and the stern hand of the law has taken him out of all possibility of rivalry with me. I am Baron Strathmere in his stead; I have the wealth and honours he hoped to inherit; yet they are all empty and valueless to me without the greater good I covet. You understand me? I love Gerda. I desire to make her my wife."

The banker flushed with pleasure.

"My dear Baron," he stammered, "believe me, I appreciate the great honour of your offered alliance. If Gerda would only consent, the hour of her marriage with you would be the happiest hour of my life. To see her Baroness Strathmere—a peeress of the realm—entitled to attend the queen's drawing-room—"

He paused in the enumeration of these possible grandeur, with the feeling that he would give half the remaining years of his life if he could only secure them for his daughter.

His heart warmed to his visitor.

As a possible son-in-law, Lord Strathmere appeared to him absolutely perfect.

"All this can easily be accomplished," said Lord Strathmere. "You can become the father of a peeress, the ancestor of a line of peers of the realm, my dear Pelham, if you will. And I need not tell you, I suppose, that I will prove a good and loving husband to your daughter. The marriage-settlements can be arranged to please you."

The banker arose and paced the room hurriedly, his heart throbbing high with ambitious hopes.

The prize he had most longed for—a title for his daughter—was within his reach.

To secure it became from this moment the object of his life.

His love for his child made him the more determined to bring about this marriage.

"I appreciate the honour you offer us, Baron," he repeated, "but Gerda is worthy of the highest position that can be offered her. She is fitted by nature to be a queen among women. Her nobility of character, her grace, her wonderful beauty, have always led me to expect for her a high destiny. I have looked forward to a great marriage for her, for she is my heiress, and will have one of the greatest properties in England at my death; but I own to you that no suitor could have presented himself with whom I could have been better pleased than with you. The Strathmores date back for centuries, they are of great wealth, are honoured for their sterling virtues, and rank with the few very first families of the realm. As to you personally, Baron, your political successes, your former brilliant marriage, and the lofty connections thereby obtained, and your unstained and noble character, make you worthy of the noblest lady in Great Britain. As Baron Strathmere, you might marry the daughter of a duke. I know all this, and say it freely that you may know that I thoroughly understand the advantages of the alliance you propose. There is only one obstacle in the way of the marriage. Gerda loves this unfortunate Chandos."

"Come with me to Australia," cried the baron. "Let her see her former lover in all his humiliation. Let her realize that he is a convict for life. Let her comprehend the gulf between them. Her love will die a natural death long before the voyage is over. And let me be at hand. Pelham, with the delicate little attentions that ladies love. Let her see me honoured, respected, in my glory. She will draw the contrast for herself, and I shall win her love long before we reach Sidney."

"If I thought that we would go with you. You are right, Baron; you must be right. I can arrange my business, and we will go, if Gerda will consent."

"Ask her to-night. Say nothing about my love for her; let that revelation be made by me, in due time. Is not that Miss Pelham's step?"

A light tread was heard without, the clicking of tiny boot heels on the marble floor of the hall. The door opened and Miss Pelham entered.

She was dressed in deep black and her

face looked white and spectral by contrast. There were dark circles still under her lovely eyes.

She was very thin and wan, but all her sorrow and illness had not destroyed or marred her glorious beauty.

Lord Strathmere arose. She started at sight of him, not having seen him since the occurrence of the tragedy.

He advanced and held out his hand, congratulating her warmly upon her recovery. She let her hand lie in his a moment, then withdrew it with a shudder. Her father placed a chair for her at the corner of the hearth and she sat down.

"You look like a snow-wreath, Miss Pelham," said the visitor, with unmistakable sympathy. "You are very delicate indeed. I am distressed to see you looking so ill."

"We were just speaking of you, Gerda," said her father, resting his hand upon the back of her chair. "The doctor says that you must have a change of air and scene—that you must travel."

"And I have been persuading Mr. Pelham to go out to Australia with me," said the baron. "The sea voyage would restore you. All that is necessary, Miss Pelham, is your consent. I sail in a fortnight, upon the transport ship 'Clymenestra'."

Miss Pelham raised her head with swift eagerness.

A sudden flash of colour leaped to her cheeks.

"The sight of the convicts need not disturb you, Gerda," said her father, and Lord Strathmere says that the cabin accommodations are very fine. Will you go dear, for my sake? Think of the splendid voyage and the wonderful country of Australia."

The young girl clasped her hands together tightly.

A great joy shone in her dusky eyes.

"I should like it!" she exclaimed, flashing a grateful look at Lord Strathmere. "I will go!"

The baron and the banker exchanged glances of satisfaction and delight.

When Lord Strathmere took his leave, a few minutes later, his heart beat high with joy and exultation.

His villainous schemes had prospered beyond his greatest expectations.

He was Baron Strathmere, of Strathmore Park, one of the richest and most powerful noblemen of Great Britain.

He had gained the wealth, power and honours for which he had so wickedly schemed.

Only one thing he coveted was yet unattained.

"But that," he thought, as he lolled back in his luxurious carriage, and was borne homeward through the wintry night, "that will also soon be mine. Gerda will see Chandos as an object of contempt, and will wonder that she ever loved him. She will believe in his guilt, and grow to hate him. I shall be at hand and she will turn to me in her bitterness and grief. I shall win her. When we reach Australia she will soon become my wife. In two weeks then we shall be upon the sea together," and he laughed, the convict, the banker-papa, Miss Pelham and I. And then comes my opportunity to win her love. Ah, I have a head for scheming. I will stake all I have gained upon my complete success!"

(To be Continued.)

COAL.

THERE are few things more luxurious and delightful than a coal-fire. How delightful to dream and imagine pictures in its glow. How can one believe that all this brightness and comfort was hidden away for thousands of years in the depths of the earth. And it seems still more incredible to imagine that, way back in our world's history, during the time that scientific people call the "Carboniferous Period," this smutty, black substance was then to be seen in

the form of monstrous trees, gigantic rashes, luxuriant grasses and wondrous ferns.

The little leaf of the world's history, which we have stolen from the dismal coal-mines, has disclosed to us more delicious and wonderful mysteries than all the charming tales of fairy-land. The researches of science picture for us a giant forest, where no bird-song, nor cry of animal, nor even hum of insect enlivens the passing hours. Shadows and absolute quiet rule the forest, only broken by the rush of tempests through the branches, and the crash of falling trees.

As ages passed, the great trees and ferns decayed, fell to the ground and were covered with falling leaves and other debris, and the floods poured upon them, filling up all intervening spaces with pebbles, mud, sand and clay, until their pressure upon the vegetable deposits and the internal heat of the earth, combined to drive out the gases and change the old forest into this black, sooty fuel, which we burn. Where this process is nearly complete, we have what is called anthracite, and where it is only partially finished, we have bituminous coal.

There these old forests have been buried, slowly changing their nature and preparing themselves for our needs, when we should come to scrimping fuel times; when hundreds of steamships should ply our waters, and hundreds of iron horses should prance across our country and through our forests and under our mountains; when thousands of manufactories and mills should whizz and buzz in our cities and villages.

Then came the men of science, like the soothsayers in the fable, and, by means of certain mysterious calculations, disclosed to us the hiding-places of this sooty gnome. And then came the sturdy miners, and with their charmed wands or pickaxes tapped upon the hidden doors of these buried riches; and, lo! at their "open sesame" the black caverns yawn and give up their dead for our consuming engines.

Here is a description which a young friend gave us recently of a descent into a coal-mine:

"Of course, we girls could not enjoy a few days together without getting into some kind of mischief, and so one sunny day we started out in fine spirits to investigate the mysteries of those underground thoroughfares. Not till long afterwards did I realise how indiscreet, and even dangerous, was our exploit—three mad-cap girls alone in that dismal mine, inhabited only by rough miners. Providentially, however, we met with no harm. Accompanied by a swarthy (I mean sooty) guide, we descended into the darkness in one of those villainous baskets, or cars, which are used for that purpose. In a few moments we found ourselves in a low, narrow gallery, running far off, an interminable length of darkness and gloom, lit only by the faint glimmer of an occasional tin lamp carried on the caps of the miners.

"Our guide, also, was adorned with one of those lamps, a small tin, teapot-looking thing, fastened by means of a wire to the front part of his cap. The flicker of these lamps, wherever there was a number of men, looked, in the distance, like tiny fire-flies. The passage soon grew so low that we were obliged to crawl almost on our hands and knees, and at one place there was a huge pile of dirt and stones and other refuse, over which we had to crawl, literally like a baby. At various points we could hear the peculiar sound of the drill boring down, sometimes almost over our heads, which caused us to quicken our speed rather more than was practicable. Far in the distance resounded the muffled roar of an explosion, while before and behind us was the monotonous thud, thud, thud, of the miners' pick-axes. But half an hour of such experience was enough for us. After so much darkness and dirt and danger, we were glad indeed, to see the bright sun and the blue sky, once more."

C. B.

LORD BEACONSFIELD has attained his seventy-second year, having been born on the 20th of December, 1805.

A LONELY ISLAND.

In this age of railroads and steamboats it seems incredible that a civilised community can get on with a single mail a year. But this is said to be the hard lot of the inhabitants of St. Kilda, one of the small islands north of Scotland. There are only sixteen families, living in cottages close together, and numbering altogether seventy-five people. They can all read, and almost every adult is a member of the church. The pastor is a man of culture, and quite contented with his little parish, looking after their morals so carefully that there is not a drunkard or vicious person among them. They have little money, as all business is done by barter with the agents of the owner of the island, who visits them once a year, and he sells everything at high prices, and buys at the lowest. They live on oatmeal and fish and birds, and the women are skilful in knitting, and make up large quantities of articles for sale on the mainland.

THE SENSE OF BEAUTY.

THERE is nothing which more distinctively marks true progress in education than the increasing breadth of view which is taken of the whole subject. Gradually we are discovering that man needs not merely the knowledge contained in text books, and laid down in the various courses of study, but much that must be gleaned from other sources; that he has not only one set of faculties to be developed, but many; and that rare culture includes nurture of every part.

Among the hitherto neglected powers of our nature is the sense of perception of beauty. We all have this in its germ, but few of us ever think it worth our while to cherish and improve it. Yet there is scarcely one of our faculties that is so amply provided for in the external world as this. Beauty pervades the entire universe. Mountains and valleys, forests and meadows, skies and oceans are full of it. The more we explore Nature the more do we discover of her loveliness. Science is every day revealing new beauty by her discoveries, and every accession of knowledge opens up charms of which we had never dreamed.

Only a small portion of creation can minister to the necessities of the body, and that portion can only be made available by toilsome labour; but the sense of beauty has but to awaken to its own need to find the whole universe waiting to pour upon it the richest supplies. In most cases our desires far outrun their possible fulfilment, but in this it is just the reverse. Here it is the inner sense that needs developing to respond to the wealth of beauty that awaits its recognition. It is as if, in an exquisite palace, filled with choice pictures and statuary, and adorned with everything that taste could suggest to make it attractive, the inhabitants were partially blind, and could barely distinguish one article from another, much less comprehend the loveliness by which they were surrounded. The world is full of beauty that we barely see, or seeing yet fail to understand or to enjoy.

It may, however, be questioned whether, after all, it is so important that this sense should be quickened and sharpened into keen appreciation. It does not help a man to earn his living, or to grow rich; it does not give him standing in society or political power; it does not add to his stock of knowledge, or enable him to fight the battles of life with any more success. It is true that it does not directly promote these results, though through its culture some of them may be indirectly aided. Yet these are not the only things in life worth pursuing, though in our materialistic age we are apt to think so. The joy that beauty confers is of itself no mean or trifling thing. Pure and innocent pleasures are the best safeguards against unwholesome excitements. He who early learns and retains the habit of enjoying external beauty, and letting its influence sink deeply into its nature,

will be greatly exposed to temptations of a gross or sensual nature.

Beauty is eminently refining, purifying, ennobling. As the eye which perceives it is the most delicate and sensitive of all the bodily organs, so the inner sense which responds to it is the most tender and refined of all the faculties. To cultivate and develop this sense is then to exalt the pleasures, to purify the desires, to refine the feelings, to ennoble the aims. No one can expand and intensify his sense of beauty without being a better man, and breathing out a sweeter influence than before. It may be, as Socrates declares, that outward beauty is but the emblem of expression of what is lovely, grand, or noble in the unseen or spiritual world. Certain it is that they are closely akin, and they act and react upon each other with the most perfect harmony.

CONVICTED.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Most of the guests at Clyffeourne were playing at lawn-tennis. Lady Markham bethought herself of a message which she would like conveyed to one of them, and, in an undertone, begged her "dear Miss Strange" to convey it for her. Alex glided away upon her errand.

Lady Markham made haste to use the opportunity thus afforded her.

"Is not Miss Strange a beautiful girl?" she asked, as Alex disappeared. "So English, too, although she has lived all her life in Greece. You knew her there, did you not, Lord Kingscourt?"

The young earl's olive skin flushed. Alex had desired him to keep their previous acquaintance secret, and he would not betray her.

Lady Vivian came to his rescue.

"Miss Strange informed me of her acquaintance with Lord Kingscourt in Greece," she said, quietly. "It was at the house of Miss Strange's father that the earl was so long ill, and was so hospitably entertained."

"I had not heard of that," declared the marquis, surprised. "You did not tell me, Kingscourt. I supposed that you were ill at a vine-dresser's hut."

"I did not say so," said the young earl. "I did not mention the name or nationality of my kind host and benefactor."

"It is curious that Miss Strange should appear in England almost as soon as you, Kingscourt," said the marquis, significantly.

"Not at all singular," declared the earl, haughtily. "The bandit Spiridon destroyed her home, and she was compelled to seek refuge elsewhere. What could be more natural, since she would not be safe in Greece from the persecutions of the ruffian, than that she should come to England, the land of her birth and of her ancestry?"

"Do you know," said Lady Markham, "there seems to me something very mysterious about this young girl. Is her father a dissipated sort of man, Lord Kingscourt?"

"He is not. He is one of the noblest, grandest men this world has ever produced," cried the earl, warmly. "He is a true and honourable gentleman, a model of courtesy, cultivated, refined, and intelligent, a man of whom England might well be proud. It is his country's misfortune that he chooses to reside abroad."

Lady Vivian smiled approvingly.

"Your description answers to my idea of Alex's father," she said.

"But why does such a man live abroad?" demanded Lady Markham. "Why does he bury himself in such a solitude as that lonely Greek coast?"

"His reasons are not known to me," answered the young earl, coldly. "I have fancied that he met, early in life, some great trouble or disappointment which would account for his exile. Once, when I made an inadvertent allusion to his wife—it was at one of my earliest interviews with him—his face changed, and such a

look came over it that I believed his exile the result of her early death. He is a man of great talent for statesmanship, and if he could be induced to return to England and take part in politics I believe he would make a mark upon his time. But he will never return."

"A mysterious recluse," said the marquis, with a little sneer on his gentle face. "A man with no character, to be embittered for life by a disappointment."

"You are mistaken, marquis. Mr. Strange has a marked individuality and force of character," interposed Lord Kingscourt. "He is a man who commands respect and honour. I do not understand him thoroughly, but I regard him as one of the most remarkable men I ever knew."

"Do you really know anything about him, Lord Kingscourt?" asked Lady Markham, abruptly. "About his family, I mean; his former place of residence; the family of his wife?"

"I never ventured to ask him such questions," answered the earl, gravely. "He is not a man to permit undue familiarities."

"I have said from the first that there was some mystery about Miss Strange," said Lady Markham. "You will all find out the truth of my intuitions. She is not what she seems."

"I agree with Lady Markham," said the marquis. "I wonder at your infatuation with this young girl, Lady Vivian. I have not liked her from the first. You will be wise to send her away."

"I shall never do that!" declared Lady Vivian. "She has won my heart with those wonderful eyes of hers. I will believe no ill of her. She is as pure as a little child, and I believe in her father for her sake."

The earl flashed a grateful glance at Lady Vivian.

A smile of perfect understanding passed between them, and Lord Kingscourt felt that the proud lady knew and approved his love for the exile's daughter.

Alex returned, and the subject was necessarily changed.

The marquis and the earl took their leave, and Lady Markham went up to her room rejoicing that she had won an adherent to her cause against Alex.

"Lord Mountheron distrusts and dislikes her also," she thought. "He will never allow her to live at the castle as the companion of his wife. I will have a private talk with him soon and impart to him all my doubts of the girl. With his aid I will turn Lady Vivian against this young adventuress and interfere with his secret plans, whatever they may be!"

Three weeks had passed since Alex Strange had come to Clyffeourne as the companion of the Lady Vivian Clyffe. During this period she had completely won the heart of her unconscious mother.

Instinct, that wonderful law of nature, had drawn the pair together in a bond of union as sweet and holy as it was unalterable.

Toward Alex the proud Lady Vivian unbent as to no other human being. The dusk eyes of the lady filled with a strange and ineffable tenderness at times when they rested on the girl's mignonette face.

The proud heart of the magnificent woman of the world thrilled, at times, at the sound of the girl's voice as it thrilled at no other sound.

The glorious sapphire eyes, so like another pair of eyes believed to be mouldering under Brazilian sods, awoke strange and subtle memories in Lady Vivian's breast, and stirred to new harmonies chords of tenderness she thought dead.

Lady Markham noted with increasing jealousy and anxiety the great and remarkable influence which Alex had acquired over her employer.

Believing the girl deceitful, and working for some secret purpose, the baronet's widow lived now but for one purpose—to oust Alex from her new position and cause her to be sent forth from Clyffeourne in disgrace.

The widow lost no opportunity to work Alex mischief.

The first party of guests at Clyffeourne had been replaced by another party numbering several persons, and to all of these Lady Markham confidentially whispered her convictions that Alex was an adventuress, and that her father, "if she had a father," was a disreputable person who had fled from England "for his country's good."

The result of her confidences was that Alex was severely let alone by Lady Vivian's guests, and that Lady Vivian herself was privately pitied and mourned over for her "infatuation with that girl."

Not all her employer's kindness and care could make Alex's life pleasant. It required all the girl's bravery and courage to bear the slights and annoyances continually put upon her in the absence of the Lady Vivian.

But for her father's sake, and also that she might continue near the mother now so dear to her, Alex bore every slight with a proud patience and gentle dignity that should have rebuked her enemies.

Lord Mountheron had joined himself to those who deemed the girl an adventuress. She reminded him unpleasantly of his unfortunate kinsman, Lord Stratford Heron, and he frequently advised Lady Vivian to send her companion away.

He had counted upon Lady Vivian's sense of loneliness and isolation to drive her to his arms, and her affection for Alex threatened to work harm to his cherished hopes.

The guests at Mount Heron Castle had departed, with the exception of Lord Kingscourt and the Honourable Bertie Knollys.

Mrs. Ingestre, hypochondriacal and nervous, was much left to herself, and was the more lonely because of the recent gaieties at the castle.

Her desire to have a companion to beguile her loneliness, to wait upon her, and to listen to her constantly varying symptoms of invalidism, had increased into a mania, yet she had been too much in awe of Lady Vivian to put her resolve into execution, and coolly proposed to carry Alex away to the castle ostensibly as her guest.

She had determined to wait no longer, however. The roar of the sea as it beat against the tall bluff of rocks upon which the castle was dizzily perched had become intolerable to her; the great empty rooms were desolate indeed; the gentlemen were absent most of the day, and Mrs. Ingestre had no one to talk to but her maid and the servants.

Something must be done at once. If Alex, whom she liked, could not come to her, she would procure someone else, but she would not remain longer in such unbearable loneliness.

She believed that Lady Vivian would soon return to town, that her marriage-day was fixed, and that Alex could well be spared by her present employer.

"No doubt it will be a relief to Lady Vivian if I offer to take the girl off her hands," she said to herself. "Rowland does not like Miss Strange, but he has not objected to my taking her as companion, and he will of course go up to London with Lady Vivian, so Miss Strange's presence here cannot possibly disturb him. I have been troubled with a false delicacy. I will go to Clyffeourne and speak to Lady Vivian about it this very afternoon, before I can have a return of those alarming pains in my heart!"

Accordingly she made an elaborate toilet and ordered the carriage.

The gentlemen were out for a sail in the yacht, and there was no one to interfere with her plans.

She was driven in great state, with coachman and footman in livery, along the Bluff Road, and she lolled back upon the silken carriage cushions, and looked languidly upon the restless, glittering sea, and meditated upon the manner in which she should present her errand to Lady Vivian, endeavouring to couch it in terms that would not displease the proud beauty of whom she stood greatly in awe.

Fate was favouring her that afternoon, and favouring the secret desire of Alex to become an inmate of the castle, where had occurred the

great tragedy in which her father's honour and happiness had been wrecked.

The ladies at Clyffebourne had been shut up within the house for two or three days by stress of weather. This day, although November, was mild and pleasant—a relief of the "St. Martin's summer," and the guests had gone out upon the lawn to play croquet.

Alex, at the request of Lady Vivian, who had been singularly blind to the slights heaped upon her young companion, had followed them, but stood a little apart, slender, proud, and beautiful, and with a coldness and hauteur of bearing that covered a sensitive and wounded heart.

Lady Markham had disseminated new innuendoes and insinuations against Alex during the past few hours, and the effect was plainly evident to the girl in the averted looks and constrained demeanour of those around her.

No one, except Lady Markham, had ever actually insulted her, for they were ladies and trained to the usages of polite society, but their glances and coldness sufficiently marked their sense of Alex's inferiority, and stabbed the object of their displeasure as effectually as invectives and denunciation could have done.

The ladies, with the exception of one or two dowagers, were all taking part in the pastime, and a mallet or two remained unappropriated.

"You have learned to play, Alex," said Lady Vivian. "You must have a share in the game. Take up that mallet, dear."

Before Alex could decline, as was her intention, one young lady dropped her mallet and expressed a desire for a walk upon the cliff.

Her example was followed by another and another, and the little group sauntered away in the direction of the sea.

Others declared themselves tired of playing; only one or two, a little confused and troubled, remained upon the ground.

The thing had been quietly done; not a look or tone had indicated the cause of the sudden separation of the players, but Alex comprehended, and the hot blood arose to her cheeks.

Lady Vivian comprehended also, and her dusk eyes flashed fire.

"Can you tell me what this means, Lady Markham?" she asked, turning to her chaperone.

"It means," said the baronet's widow, trembling a little, "that the young ladies do not consider Miss Strange their equal."

"And why not—since I consider her my equal?" demanded Lady Vivian, haughtily.

"My dear Lady Vivian," said a dowager countess, a mother of two blooming daughters, and a lady whom Lady Vivian cordially respected, "it is a pity that this question should be brought up before Miss Strange. Yet possibly she may be able to set herself right. The young ladies are glad to accept any friend of yours as their equal; but they fancy, I think, that your liking for your young companion may have obscured your usually excellent judgment. The conduct of the girls is most unadvisable, but, after all, what do they know of Miss Strange? If she were not quite so reticent concerning her family history she would no doubt speedily become a favourite."

"If I vouch for her, is not that enough?" exclaimed Lady Vivian. "That she is my protégée should be enough for my friends."

The countess looked helplessly at Lady Markham. Lady Vivian offered her arm to Alex and led the way to the house.

Before they reached the door the Mount Heron carriage came rolling up the avenue, bringing Mrs. Ingestre upon the errand which now began to look formidable to her.

Lady Vivian received her friend graciously, the more so that she marked her kindly greeting to Alex.

How Mrs. Ingestre broached her errand that lady never quite remembered, but she managed to state that she was very lonely at Mount Heron since the lady guests were departed, and that she supposed that Lady Vivian would soon go up to London to order her trousseau, and that, if Lady Vivian would only consent, and Miss Strange were willing, she would like Alex to spend a month with her at the castle.

Lady Vivian saw, with a keen pang, Alex's face brighten at the invitation.

"I shall stay a fortnight longer at Clyffebourne, Mrs. Ingestre," said her ladyship. "My guests are invited for that length of time. If Miss Strange wishes to go to you for a visit until I leave Cornwall I shall not object, but when I go up to town she must go with me."

Mrs. Ingestre had her private opinion upon that point. Her persuasions of Alex's and Lord Mountheron's influence upon Lady Vivian would undoubtedly combine to keep Alex with her, she thought, but she wisely refrained from saying so.

"I should be sorry to leave you, dear Lady Vivian," said Alex, as both ladies turned to her, "but I should like to visit Mount Heron."

"Can you come to me to-morrow, Miss Strange?" asked Mrs. Ingestre, eagerly.

"If Lady Vivian is willing."

Lady Vivian was willing. Her eyes were opened to the slights which her protégée must have suffered in silence, and, since she could not send away her invited guests, she would send away Alex during their stay.

The matter was promptly arranged. Lady Vivian promised to send Alex in her carriage in the morning, and soon after Mrs. Ingestre took her leave, highly delighted at her success.

Her delight was scarcely so great as that of Lady Markham when she heard of Alex's proposed departure. Success seemed to have crowned her efforts. She was to be rid of the young rival whom she hated.

Lady Vivian paid Alex marked attention at dinner and during the evening. She was careful to repeat Lord Kingscourt's high commendations of Mr. Strange, yet without saying where and how the earl had known him.

She exerted herself to create a counter-current of sympathy in Alex's favour; but prejudice is not easily uprooted, and the sense of caste was strong among her guests.

Lady Vivian's rank and social influence, great as they were, could not quite atone for Miss Strange's "mysterious reticence."

The evening was nearly over, when Alex, with her white shawl flung about her, taking advantage of Lady Vivian's attention to an elderly guest, stole out of the house upon the lawn. As she hurried past one of the windows, she ran against a man hidden in the shrubbery, who was attempting to look into the drawing-room. Alex started back in swift recoil. He drew away as in alarm, and a ray of light from the room within fell upon his face.

Alex recognised him with a cry of incredulity and horror.

"Papa!" she gasped. "Oh, Heaven! Papa!"

(To be Continued.)

INTEMPERANCE.

A CORRESPONDENT writes:—One often reads sad accounts of the increase of intemperance amongst ladies, but it was always a puzzle to me how they managed to get anything to drink if their husbands took the precaution of making off with the key of the wine cellar. "I had, however, my eyes opened somewhat a day or two ago, and it happened in this way. I was discussing a biscuit and a glass of sherry, at a pastry-cook's shop at the West End, when an elderly lady entered and finished off two glasses of port. We left together, and she, walking a little further down the street, went into another similar establishment. I followed on pretence of getting a sponge cake, and there I saw she had two more glasses. The investigation cost me twopence, but I think I can now understand how the fair sex manage to take more than is good for them. At the same time I feel sure if my better half sees this paragraph she will never believe that the woman was aged."

A HORSE race, the first ever held at Madrid, will be added to the marriage festivities of the King of Spain. £6,000 will be given in prizes, and it will be open to native and foreign horses.

BRAIN WORKERS.

BANKERS, railroad managers, insurance officers, great merchants, ministers and lawyers, all suffer sooner or later from two causes—overwork of brain and underwork of body. We know well that if brain and body are both exercised, health is obtained. We know, too, that if the body is laboriously employed while the brain remains inactive, the animal tendencies increase, and intelligence wanes. We are also aware that the brain powers cannot be kept in prolonged tension by earnest and prolonged mental effort without more or less injury, unless the body is at the same time in such a condition of active exertion or exercise as to determine the blood from the brain to other vital organs, and to the extremities.

Repose is essential to mental efforts; and as concentrated thought and active bodily exercise are incompatible, the serious problem for the brain-worker is this:

How shall I live and preserve health of body and mind, through years of close application to my business—my banking-house, my office, my counting-house, my study—regardless of exercise?

The answer is this: there is no absolute substitute for exercise, just as there is no substitute for air or sunlight. Nothing so relieves the overwrought brain as prolonged muscular movements in the open air. Exercise of some kind is possible to all, either as a brisk walk, a horse-back ride, or muscular manipulation by the strong hands of an attendant. If exercise be neglected in part, we must give more thoughtful heed to other conditions. We must not supplement vicious habits with imperfect food.

The law of waste and repair is only partially understood, but there is a good deal of evidence to the fact that if our food is poor in the elements which are evolved or wasted in a certain line of labour, that description of labour soon becomes onerous, burdensome, difficult, impossible. The blacksmith wastes nitrogen; if we feed him on bread and butter—carbon—he wields his hammer but listlessly. Supply him with beef and beans, and he returns to his labour each morning, strong as a giant refreshed with sleep.

The brain worker must have his appropriate aliment also, or starvation, and the feebleness of action which always accompanies it, are certain to result, and the end of brain-starving is paralysis and imbecility, preceded often by long continued pain and misery.

In brain-starvation there is little to be derived from medicine. Business ties should be loosened or severed, and life in the open air should begin. The cure comes through change, and of all changes a change of diet from the usual to the scientific plan is the most important. The elements lacking must be supplied in food. Not in quack mixtures advertised as "brain food," because these are merely solutions of drugs, put in bottles which bear on their labels the grossest misstatements.

Our friends must not be misled into the belief that these bottled fluids are food in any sense, even though the directions suggest that they be swallowed in milk, or tea, or coffee, or chocolate. The sufferer who needs phosphorus or iron, or other potent drug, will do well to take it under the advice of a skilled physician, instead of dosing himself with an unscientific mixture bearing a food label. The truth is that "brain food" is not composed of stimulating or nerve-exactants which temporarily elevate and permanently depress. Brain-food is blood-food, and nothing more. If our food contains, in easily assimilable form, the elements which go to make perfect blood, and if the air we breathe be pure and abundant, and if the action of the heart and lungs be encouraged by activity of the limbs—then will our blood be rich and pure, and every function of brain and nerves and muscles will be vigorously performed.

The out-door labourer can make blood which will serve his purpose for a time, out of the food with which the average table is supplied; but

the sedentary brain-worker who seeks greater achievements, and employs higher powers, must be provided with more refined and more highly vitalised nutriment, or sooner or later brain power wanes.

When the brain is exhausted beyond the power of sleep to restore, when even sleep fails to come at our bidding, when our daily food palls upon the appetite, or fails to impart strength and vigour, without which life is burdensome, when all the instrumentalities at our command are found to be inadequate to impart energy of brain and body; and when the fear comes upon us that all is not quite as it should be—then, if we are wise, we will seek out the food-chemist, instead of the doctor and the druggist, and ask him whether the fuel which we are daily supplying to the furnace is the best possible fuel to generate the kind of force which our avocation demands. We can live after a fashion on a weak and imperfect diet, but if the food-fuel is bad for a considerable period, the machine will work but languidly after many days, and the labour which was a delight will be a burden.

Let us apply to ourselves a little of that wisdom which we employ upon our horses and cows. When they are “out of condition,” we change their food and improve it. When we are out of condition in body or brain, let us make for ourselves a similar change, and let that change be directed by knowledge and scientific skill.

WHO DID IT? or, THE WARD'S SECRET.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

The Count di Serrano had but recently returned from a temporary absence from his Italian home.

Too recently indeed to have done more than cursorily examine the state of domestic matters in his absence, though he was a man too shrewd and far-sighted to be altogether ignorant of the chief outlines of what had occurred.

He was partaking of his spare though delicately-cooked breakfast, when the servant came into the room and whispered something in his ear.

“It is impossible; he cannot enter,” said the count, quickly.

“He insists on it—he threatens,” said the man, with a terrified air; “he has a full warrant.”

The words were scarcely uttered when Drovski, the detective, entered unannounced.

“Count di Serrano, I demand of you the criminal of whom I am in search, charged with the murder of Reginald Waldegrave. Neville Grantley, I mean.”

The count gave a slight start, but replied, scornfully:

“Do you imagine him to be within these walls?”

“Well nigh within hearing. Certainly within call,” returned Drovski.

“And more, do you believe him guilty?” said the count.

“He will assuredly be found so.”

“That is no answer. Could not you get him off and bring the real criminal to light?” asked the count.

“Possibly.”

“Who should you accuse?”

“That is an unfair question, count. My errand is to—”

“To hunt out the real murderer of Reginald Waldegrave; is it not so?”

Drovski nodded.

“Then why should you hesitate when I can give you a clue that you ought to be able to work out?” returned the count.

“Tell me your belief, and I will give you my reasons for or against it,” said Drovski.

“Can you not guess?”

“Perhaps.”

“Have you any morsel of information that may tend to prove what you suspect and I believe?” said the count.

“I reply nothing, save that Viola Devaux is safe and well cared for—that is all I can say at present. Now I am going to do my duty,” he added, rising, and walking towards the door that led to Neville Grantley’s secret refuge.

The count started up for a moment. Then he appeared to think better of his right course. He sat down in his chair and listened to what was about to take place. He heard the door quietly open.

He caught the startled exclamation of the unfortunate young man as the detective addressed him.

It was brief, but agonised in its low cry of:

“Viola, poor Viola, I would have fain spared you this.”

There came Drovski’s cool, decided tones:

“Neville Grantley, I arrest you as an escaped prisoner, who has broken his prison confinement unlawfully, and who is still under accusation of murder. What have you to say to this?”

“Nothing.”

“Then you confess your guilt?”

“I confess that I escaped as an innocent man from an accusation which I had no means of disproving,” said the young man, firmly.

“And fled to a foreigner’s house to whom you were unknown,” said Drovski, scornfully.

“Never. I was brought here perfectly unconscious by the goodness of the count, whose yacht picked me up from the wreck of the boat in which I had escaped,” returned Neville. “I had been here I know not how long ere I was aware where I was, or who sheltered me.”

“And you told him the truth?”

“That you had better ask of him,” said Neville, haughtily.

“Well, it rests with him perhaps rather than yourself,” said Drovski, coolly. “However, that you will have to settle afterwards. My business is to take you safely to England, and then there will be those who will know how to deal with you and him also. Are you ready, young gentleman?” he went on, regarding him fixedly.

Neville shuddered involuntarily.

It was not in human nature not to shrink from what lay before him.

“Would that I had died,” he said. “Would that the waves had not spared me for this!”

Drovski looked compassionately at him, though his manner was by no means so softened as his expression. Perhaps one was less under his control than the other.

“Hark’ee, young gentleman, the old saying tells us that those who are born to be hung will not be drowned. And I will say that if your star is a good one no power can bring you to hurt, whether foe or friend. Just be a man and a brave one. You have many who are interested in you. Some who love you. Even I have a sort of pity for you, and if all goes right I may help you at the nick of time. But you must go with me—you must submit to your fate, and in your case to stand to the truth will be the safest course, and that’s what doesn’t often appear to accused murderers.”

* * * * *

“The capture is made at last, Mr. Leclerc. We have found the fugitive. You will be delighted that justice will be done now,” said Drovski, who had been just admitted to an interview with the gentleman so deeply interested in the discovery just made by the detective.

Paul started as if a bomb-shell had struck him, though a moment after he collected himself sufficiently to control and subdue his emotion.

“Discovered! Captured! Can the dead come to life?” he exclaimed, with a tongue that did in a measure cling to the roof of his mouth.

“Dead come to life? Why no, not exactly, Mr. Leclerc,” returned Drovski, with a suppressed grin. “If so, it’s easy enough to find a man who was thought dead, and is still alive. And that’s what we’ve done now, you see.”

“You’ve found the real animal then,” returned Paul, hoarsely.

“I’ve found Mr. Neville Grantley, at any

rate,” returned Drovski, significantly. “It’s for the judge and jury to say whether he’s guilty or not. But what’s more to my purpose just now is that you will have to return to England yourself, Mr. Leclerc, as a witness. It’s awkward that Miss Devaux is missing, but perhaps you can do all that’s necessary, and perhaps better,” he added, with a nod.

Paul could scarcely suppress a shudder.

“Well, if it must be so,” he said, “if it must be so, but it is very difficult on my daughter’s account.”

“Can you not leave her here? Your absence will probably not be long,” suggested the detective.

Mr. Leclerc mused.

“It is impossible without a chaperone except her maid.”

“Oh, that’s soon settled, sir. There are plenty of ladies of rank here who would be quite ready to have the young lady to stay with them, or come to take care of her for a sum of money that would cover all their expenses. The great folks here are not so rich as in England, and they are not too proud to take a little money when they can get it.”

Paul nodded assentingly.

“Well, well, I shall see. I certainly shall not wish Miss Leclerc to have the fatigue of a rapid journey, and besides, it is very likely that she may finally settle here. So it makes it more undesirable.”

“As the Countess di Serrano?” asked Drovski. “But then there’s your pretty place, ‘The Wildness,’ you see, which it would be very awkward for you to leave. I suppose you and your son-in-law will part the year between the two?” he added.

“What do you know about it?” said Paul, incautious haste.

“What do I know? There’s few things we’re not bound to know?” replied the detective, “and especially when it belongs to a case we have in hand. When will you start, sir. I mean to be off at once with my prisoner; but it would be awkward for you and he to go in the same ship. I shall travel overland through France. If you start in the next steamer from Nice you’ll be at Southampton pretty well as soon as we will, and I’ll take care the trial is pretty well hurried forward for everyone’s sake.”

A few more questions, a little more pressing urgency that might well be called command, and it was decided that the detective’s arrangements should be carried out, and that so soon as Pauline could be placed under safe and eligible protection, her father should leave Florence for his eventful visit to England.

Drovski’s predictions were correct, or else his influence unbounded.

A most remarkable coincidence produced an amiable and pressing invitation for Mdlle. Leclerc to stay with a widowed contessa, who had suddenly discovered her own loneliness and desire for society.

And though Mr. Leclerc did consider it more desirable for his daughter to receive the Italian lady than for her to visit in her own less comfortably-arranged house, yet the offer was sufficiently eligible for the emergency to remove all difficulties.

So the Contessa Strazzi took up her abode in the hired house of the Englishman.

And Paul Leclerc, with a gloomy apprehension that he could scarcely account for, even by the actual circumstances of the case, took leave of his daughter.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

DAYS had passed on.

The young girl had scarcely recovered her grief at her father’s departure, though the lively and fascinating contessa exerted herself to the utmost to cheer her young charge.

But Pauline was oppressed by the succession of separations, the mystery, and the suspense which she had endured for the last few months.

And though she was kept in a degree of ignorance, which was, to say the least, merciful,

as to the actual truth, she felt desolate and helpless in the absence of her father, of Viola, and of the Count di Serrano.

Yes, she perhaps missed the latter more than her own parent or her companion.

He was so great a support in his calm, dignified ways, and, however absurd it might seem, Pauline had begun to cherish a dependent affection and respect for him.

She had been taught to consider him as her husband, and when he too seemed to disappear and leave her alone in her deserted home she, by some perversity of inclination, dwelt more on his absence than on that of her natural companions.

"Where was he? Why did he desert her? Had he forgotten his promise?" were questions that she continually asked herself.

And when at last the servant announced in a somewhat subdued tone:

"Count Antonio di Serrano," the girl could scarcely control in decorous bounds the triumph of her heart.

She advanced eagerly to receive her visitor. Her beautiful features were glowing with exultation, and her lips parted in a smile that many a younger man would have given much to win from one so fair.

But the count did not altogether respond to this warm greeting.

He took her hand in his with a grave air, that in itself was enough to have excited suspicion in her mind.

"You are well, I see," he said, leading her to a seat. "I feared you might suffer in your father's absence."

She did not remark the peculiar intonation of his voice.

She did not see that he was cooler and graver than was his wont.

And to say truth she was more anxious on that score than any other at that moment.

"I thought you had forgotten or were absent," she said. "I scarcely believed you would not have better fulfilled your promise to look after me."

"I did—I did," he answered, gently. "But there were reasons why it was impossible for me to come before. And now I fear I shall be an unwelcome visitor."

"Why?" she asked, timidly. "I do not think that can be possible, count."

"Because I have bad news for you," he said. "Because I am the messenger of evil tidings, Pauline."

She looked in his face eagerly.

There was a gloomy sadness in its expression that could scarcely be mistaken.

It was no superfluous or idle warning that he thus strove to give.

"Is it—my—father—or—Viola?" she asked, tremulously.

He shook his head with a tender gravity.

"Pauline, my child, be brave. Can you trust me?" he said, slowly.

She clasped his hand that held hers with a convulsive grasp.

"Tell me. I will try. I do trust you, but—but what has happened? Is he dead?"

He drew her towards him with the affectionate sympathy of a father rather than a lover.

"My poor girl, it is a heavy trial for you, but can you believe my words when I tell you that it is best—that even such a sorrow as this is as nothing compared with what it might have been. Had your father lived it might well have been that it would have been for his own terrible suffering and yours."

"Then he is dead!" she exclaimed. "He is dead, and I am alone!"

She did not shriek nor weep, but every tinge of colour left her cheeks and lips.

And the count feared that a swoon would drown in unconsciousness her grief, if indeed it were not a boon to the afflicted one to forget for a time.

But Pauline did not faint.

Perhaps there was some magic in the presence of the man who stood by her side that gave her courage to endure, or else she had become more accustomed to the exercise of fortitude.

"How was it? What was it?" she gasped, in a low tone. "Was the ship lost?"

"No," returned the count, "not so. It was a strange and special accident that ended your father's life. He was pacing the deck late in the dusk; and by some negligence the hold was left open, and he slipped without one hope of saving himself. He was taken up insensible, and never spoke more."

Pauline listened breathlessly.

Her hands were clasped together.

Her head was bowed on her knees.

Ah, how could she tell that it had been a retribution for evil deeds, that the restless raverie that had been the real cause of the accident was to be attributed to the remorse for the past and the anxiety for the future which haunted the unhappy man's mind.

It had been a sudden and a fearful end, but it might be that it was in some respects more merciful than that which had been avoided, had the victim reached England.

Or one of two things must have taken place had his life been spared.

Paul Leclerc would have brought more guilt on his head by condemning the innocent, or he would have had to endure the terrible shame and the punishment which must have been his portion.

Thus crime will eventually work out its own reward, even in this troubled world.

Pauline remained silent for a few minutes, then she suddenly raised her head to his anxious face.

"I must go home," she said. "I cannot stay here, unless—"

She paused. She could not finish the phrase that hung on her tongue.

The count perhaps guessed its purport.

"Not yet, Pauline. If you will submit to be guided by me you will remain here for the present. There will be much to be done and arranged that will only be painful to you. When all is over it will be ample time for you to go to your home," he added, with an emphasis that might be susceptible of two meanings.

Pauline's pale cheek did warm a little as she replied:

"Will you be here? Shall I see you?"

"Not altogether, Pauline. I must leave Italy for a brief time. There is much to arrange in England of my own affairs as well as others. But I will take care that you are carefully watched over in my absence," he added, gently; "and when I return, should all be settled as I partly venture to hope—should all be settled for those I love best, then, Pauline, then it shall be for you to decide whether an idea, that, I confess, originated in very different reasons, shall be carried out—whether you will and can be happy as my wife."

She started with a mingled sensation of pleasure and pain.

"Then you did not wish it?" she said. "You were but mocking when you asked it?"

"Ask no questions, if you are wise, my poor girl," he returned. "If you really do love and trust me you will not think I am a deliberate deceiver. No, whatever may have been the case once I do from my heart deal truly and lovingly with you now; you shall be under my care and protection whatever you may decide in the future, and if—if, Pauline, you can be—in all sincerity and deliberation, wish to be—the wife of a man who might be your father, you shall never repent."

It was soothing to the orphan's ear.

"Then you will not forsake me? I am very lonely and destitute now," she murmured, faintly.

"Never, never, poor child, so long as I have life, and you desire my protection; never!" he returned.

And Pauline leaned like a tired, sorrowful child on his bosom.

It was rather like a parent and child than a lover and his betrothed.

But in any case it was a blessed relief to the orphan.

And when at length he left her, and she obeyed his request to send to him Louise, it was with a gentle submission which might well pro-

pitate the most exacting that she quitted his presence and repaired to her chamber.

Louise was soon summoned to his presence. An interview of some length succeeded.

Louise was evidently less quickly moulded to his will, for there was a protracted discussion and a decided and earnest argument on the count's side, ere she at length yielded.

And the last words ere they parted might well give an idea of the previous dialogue.

"My good girl, I have given to you a confidence such as never yet has been entrusted to a living being. If you do betray it ere the due time I can but warn you that all will be lost. You have erred, as you confess, you have been mercifully saved from the very worst consequences of your error. But, if you will be guided by me, your conscience shall be set at ease, and a rich reward will be yours."

The girl listened impatiently.

"You don't trust me, and if it were not for Miss Viola I'd be bound to tell you to do as you liked, and see what you'd get. But I love her dearly, poor young lady, and for her sake you shall be obeyed. She shall be forthcoming at the right time, and, heaven grant, for good and not for evil."

And with a half respectful, half defiant courtesy, the Abigail quitted the presence of the count.

(To be Continued.)

THE CZAR'S "MISSION."

The following moderate demands, which recently appeared in a Moscow paper, may interest some of our Russophiles who believe in the mission of the Czar:—"It is necessary for Russia to possess the Turkish fleet; and the Black Sea must be exclusively hers. Turkey can only be allowed to remain there as a guest. She cannot have the right to keep a fleet in a sea which must be ours nor the power of sending a fleet into that sea. The Porte must give up the right of possessing fortresses at Varna and Sinope, as well as along the whole coast of the Black Sea. If the Black Sea must be Russian, the Straits also must be Russian. The country abutting upon the Straits will be ours,—perhaps not permanently occupied—and Turkey possibly may be allowed to hold it, but no war vessels must approach this territory.

"How can these objects be attained? To effect them Russia should also possess garrisons and fortresses on the coast, and anchorage for ships of war in the Bosphorus, or the right of occupying the capital when any armed vessel approaches the Dardanelles, as well as of prohibiting the entrance of any foreign (armed) vessel into the Bosphorus. We must have the right of sending our ships of war into the Mediterranean. This is the necessary sequel to our possession of the Black Sea. If we do not possess this right the Black Sea will not be wholly ours."

After a little more of this kind of thing, England is facetiously alluded as "that worm" which destroys Russian communication with the East.

HUNGER.

If a man in good health has not eaten anything for some days, he will die if he eats heartily. When persons are found in an almost starving condition, light food, in small quantities, and at short intervals, is essential to safety. The reason is, that as soon as we begin to feel hungry, the stomach rolls and works about, and continues to do so, unless satisfied, until it is so exhausted that there is scarcely any vital energy; it is literally almost tired to death, and, therefore, digestion is performed slowly, and with great difficulty. Hence when a person has been kept from eating several hours beyond his usual time, instead of eating fast and heartily, he should take his food with deliberation, and only half as much as if he had eaten at the regular time. Sudden and severe illness has often resulted from the want of this precaution, and sometimes death has followed.



[A WIDOW BEWITCHED.]

THE
WIDDER DOOLAN'S COURTSHIP.

It was about six weeks after Nancy Cypher's death. It was a lovely September mornin', in the fall of the year, when I waked up, and opened my eyes at about 5 o'clock a.m., in the forenoon.

The bedroom bein' on the back of the house, and secure from intruders, we wusn't never particular to lower, and put down the curtains. And I could see a lovely picture between the folds of snowy white cotton cloth, edged with a deep, beautiful net and fringe of my own makin', that wus tied gracefully back on each side of the winder with a cord and tassel (also of my own makin').

It wus a picture handsomer than any of 'em, framed by Thomas J., that hung up in our parlour.

Close by the winder, and right in front of it, was a rose-bush and a wax bull, full of bright scarlet, and snow-white berries. And over 'em flamed out a maple, dressed up in more colours than Joseph's coat, and each colour perfectly beautiful.

The birds wus a-singin' to the branches sweet, and strong, and earnest, and though I couldn't understand a word they said, still it was a very happyfyin' song to me.

Through some of the maple branches I could see the blue sky a-shinin' down; but lower down,

through the boughs of the rose and wax bulls, I could see the east, a-lookin' handsomer than I ever remembered seein' the east look. It seemed as if it had fairly outdone itself a-tryin' to make a lovely and beautiful startin' place for the sun, to set out from on his daily tower. The sun seemed to enjoy it dretfully, havin' such a levey home to set out from.

It seemed to look so extremely attractive to him that I knew, unless sunthin' uncommen happened, he would be punctual to be back there to the very minute the next mornin'. And thinks'es I to myself (for moral eppisodin' has become almost a 2d. or 3d. nater to me), if home wus always made so bright and attractive, there would be other sons and heads of families that would be more punctual and delighted to get back to their startin' places and homes at the exact minute.

But I probably didn't eppisod on this theme more'n a moment or a moment and a half, though it is as noble and elevatin' a theme as ever wus eppisod on, for another thought came to me, almost overpowerin'ly, as I see the sun a-settin' out so grand, and noble, and happy on his tower.

The thought that come to me wus this: I wished that I too could set out on a short tower. I had stayed at home for quite a spell.

And though home is the best spot in the hull world for a stiddy diet, still the appetite calls for spices, and different sorts of food.

Human nater, and especially wemen human nater, likes a change and variety. And it does

come kinder nateral to a wemen to want to go a-visatin', now and then, and sometimes oftener.

I had been a-wonderin' it over in my mind for a number of days, though as yet I had not tackled Josiah upon the subject, not knowin' how he would take it, but knowin' well that men do not feel as wimmen do about visatin'.

The county fair wus to be held the next week at Doover town, sixteen miles from Jenesville.

And I had two aunts there, Sophrenia Cypher, she that wus Sophrenia Burpy, my mother's own sister, and married to Solomon Cypher's only brother, and then she that wus, and now is, Samantha Ann Burpy, my mother's youngest sister.

A maiden lady, livin' on an independent property of her own, with a hired girl, and sound and excellent principles.

I was named after her, and set a sight of store by her. She hain't an old maid from necessity, far from it, she had chances.

I hadn't visited them for over five years, and never wus to a county fair in my life; and as I lay there on my goose-feather pillow a seein' the sun set out and travel gloriously on his tower, I thought to myself how sweet it would be if I and my Josiah could go and do likewise. Could go to Doover town, visit our aunts, and attend to the fair.

But studyin' as deep as I had studied on the subject of men's dispositions, I felt that I must be as wise as a serpent and harmless as a dove. And so I gently and almost tenderly punched my companion with my elbow and says, in awful, affectionate axents:

"Josiah!"

"What is the matter?" says he, a wakin' up sudden. "What are you goarin' me with your elbow for?"

His tone and his demeanor would have struck dismay to the heart of a weaker wemen, but I kep' right on, and said to him, in still more tender and affectionate axents:

"Josiah, you seem to me to be a runnin' down, I am alarmed about you, Josiah Allen."

"Oh, shaw!" says he, and it wus as fractious and worrysome a "shaw" as I ever heard shawed in my hull life.

But I continued on and continued, knowin' that perseverance was requisit' and necessary.

Says I, "You cannot conceal it from your pardner, Josiah; you are not in one-half so good order as you wus in."

"Wall! what of it? What if I haint?" he snapped out awful snappish.

Says I, in still more tender tones, "You need a change, Josiah; you ort to go off on a short tower, you and your pardner, Samantha."

"A tower!"

Oh! never, never did I, durin' my life, ever see a tower snapped out as that tower wus. He acted scornful, and overbearin', and almost haughty about the idee.

And some wimmen would have been completely skirt out by his mean, it wus so cold, and threat'ning, and offish.

Not so Samantha.

No! though his demeanor wus such that I almost despaired of success, still I felt that I would do all that wemen could do, and then if I must give it up, I could have a clear conscience. So inspired, and held up by this resolve, I laid to, and got a breakfast, that exceeded anything that had been seen for months in Jenesville, in the line of breakfas'ses. It affected the widder Doolan dreadfully; she shed tears, she said it was "so beautiful, and reminded her so of Doolan."

And it wus perfectly delicious, and I could see, as Josiah partook of it, that his mean wus a gradually mellerin' down, and growin' softer, and more yieldin' and sweet.

And finally, when he had got about half through his meal, and he could see that as good as the vittals had been precedin', better was to come, then I tackled him, and then I got the victory. He consented.

The widder Doolan seemed more'n willin' to stay and keep house for us, and suffice it to say,

that the next afternoon saw us a settin' out on our tower.

Aunt Samantha Ann wus perfectly delighted to see us, and we spent the most of the time with her, though we made aunt Sophenia a good, honourable visit; she, too, wus glad to see us—very.

We stayed to Doover town jest a week to a day, attended to the fair, which wus very interestin' and agreeable, both to myself and to Josiah.

The last day of the fair we laid out to attend only half a day, and start for home about noon, so as to reach home in good season. We had told widder Doolan we would be there certainly that day, before nightfall.

It wus probably about half-past ten a.m., in the forenoon, I was standin' in the hall devoted to picters, and flowers, and pillar cases, and tatten, and embroidery, and so forth, and so forth, and I wus jest examinin' a lamp mat, which was perfectly beautiful, when a good-lookin' wemen came up to me, and says she, a lookin' up above my head:

"Have you seen the phantom leave?" or sunthin' to that effect.

And I says to her, firmly but kindly:

"There hain't been no phantom here appearin' to me, and how could I see it leave?"

And thinkin' she wus in the dark on this matter, and it wus my duty to enlighten her, says I:

"Somebody has been a-tryin' to impose on you, mam. There hain't no such things as ghosts or phantoms."

She said sunthin' about "their bein' a case," or "sunthin';" she talked dreful low, and the noise around wus fearful, so I couldn't heer her over and above well. But from what I did heer, I see she wus on the wrong track, and says I, firmly:

"I defy you, mam, to bring forward a case of ghost or phantom that will bear the daylight," says I. "They are made up of fear, and fancy, and moonshine."

She took up her parasol and pinted right up to a glass case, and says she:

"I ment them phantom leaves there, up in that case."

"Oh!" says I, in a relieved tone, "I thought you ment a ghost!"

They looked handsome, some like the frost work on our winders in the winter.

Wall, it probably wusn't a half-an-hour after that my pride had a fall. Truly, when we are a-standin' up the straightest, tottin' may come on to us, and sudden crumphin' of the knees.

There I had been a-boastin', in my proud, philosophical spirit, that there wus no such things as phantoms, and lo, and behold! within thirty-one minutes time I thought I see a ghost appearin' to me.

I was skeert and awe-struck. The way on't wus, I stood there not thinkin' of no trouble, when all of a sudden I heerd these words:

"Oh, Doolan! Doolan! If you was alive I shouldn't be in this perdiickerment."

If I had had some hen's feathers by me I should have burnt a few, to keep me from given up and fainting away. And then these words came to me:

"Oh, Doolan! Doolan! You never would have stood by and seen your relic smashed to pieces before your linement."

And as I heerd these words I seen her appearin' to me. I see the Widder Doolan margin' from the crushin' crowd, and advancin' onto me like a phantom.

Says I, in a low voice:

"Be you a ghost, or a phantom? or are you forerunner, Widder?"

Says I:

"You be a forerunner, I know you be."

For even as I looked, I see behind her the form of Solemen Cypher, advancin' slowly, and appearin' to me.

I felt strange and feerfully curious.

But within half or two-thirds of a moment, my senses came back, for on givin' her a closer look, I see that no respectable ghost, that thought anything of itself, would be ketched

out in company, a-lookin' so like fungation. I felt better, and says I:

"Widder Doolan, how under the sun did you come here to Doover town?"

Says she:

"Samantha, I am married; I am on my tower."

I thought again, almost wildly, of burnt feathers, but I controlled myself pretty well, and says I:

"Who to?"

"Solemen Cypher," says she. "We are goin' to his brother's, on our tower."

As she said this it all came back to me—Solemen's talk, the day he came to borry my clothes for the mourners; her visits to his housekeeper sense; and his strange and foolish errants to our house from day to day.

Why he had made such strange and mysterious errants to our house sense his wife died, that I had told Josiah, "I believed Solemen Cypher wus a-loosin' his faculties," and I shouldn't have been a mite surprised to have had him beset us to lend him a meetin' house, or try to get the loan of an Egyptian mummy. Now I see through them strange and mysterious errants of hisen.

But I didn't speak my thoughts; I only said, almost mechanically:

"Widder Doolan, what under the sun has put it into your head to marry?"

"Wall," she said, "she had kinder got into the habit of marryin', and it seemed some like 2nd nater to her, and she thought Solemen had some of Mr. Doolan's linement, and she thought she'd kinder marry to him and—"

She tried to excuse it off, but she didn't give any firm reason that carried conviction to my soul.

But I says to myself, in reasonable axents:

"Samantha, can you—can you ever obtain anything to carry from an ort?"

I see, on lookin' closer at her, what made her look so oncomen curios.

She had tried to dress sort o' bridly, and at the same time, was a-mournin' for Doolan.

(She never will get that man out of her head, I don't believe.)

She said: "She didn't want to hurt Solemen's feelings." She put on the white bobbinet lace to please Cypher. But," says she, "though Solemen don't mistrust it, my black bead collar, and jest half of my weddin' dress means Doolan."

It was a black and white lawn, with big, even checks.

The skirt wus gathered in full all round, and it was made plain waist.

It set pretty well, only it drawed in acrost the chest.

(She made it herself, and cut it too narrer).

She had a shawl, with a palm leaf border, that she had when she married Doolan; and a Leg-horn bonnet, that she wore on the same occasion.

It come over her face considerable, and had a bunch of artificial flowers on each side of her face.

Her veil was made out of an old, white lace cape of her'n, but the edgin' round it was new—twopence-halfpenny a yard, for she told me so.

And she had a pair of new white gloves, No. seven, purchased with a view to their skrinkin' in the future, and a white cotton handkerchief. But she told me (in strict confidence) that she had got a black pocket to her dress, and she had on a pair of black, elastics.

Says she:

"I cannot forget Doolan, I never can forget that dear man."

I knew she couldn't.

Solemen seemed to use her pretty middlin' well, only I could see that he felt above her feerfully.

He acted dreful domineerin', and seemed to feel very, very haughty towards wimmen. He looked down on us awfully as a race, and said we should both probably get hurt, before we left the ground.

He and Josiah went out to look at some cattle, for a few moments, and the widder, bein' very

talkative, told me all about her courtship. I says to her:

"Widder, I believe you mean well, but how under the sun could you marry a man six weeks after his wife died?"

"Wall," says she, "Solemen said that the corpse wouldn't be no deader than it was then, if he waited three or four months, as some men did."

"And," says she, "he asked me to have him in a dreful handsome way," says she; "the Children of the Abbey, or Thadeus of Warsnw, nor none of 'em, couldn't have done it up in any more romantic and foamin' way," says she. "The way on't wus, I had been to see his housekeeper, and he wus a bringin' me home, and I wus a praisin' up his waggon and horses—a new double waggon with a spring seat, and all of a sudden he spoke out, in a real ardent and lover-like tone.

"Widder Doolan! if you will be my bride, the waggon is yours, and the mares," says he. "Widder, I throw myself onto your feet, and I throw the waggon and the mares, and with them I throw eighty-five acres of good land, fourteen cows, five calves, four three year olds, and a yearlin'; a dwellin' house, a new horse barn, and myself. I throw 'em all onto your feet, and there we lay on 'em."

"He waited for me to answer. And it frustrated me so, that I says:

"Oh, Doolan! Doolan! if you wus alive, you would tell me what to do to do right."

"And that," she said, seemed to mad him, his forehead all wrinkled up, and looked black and hard as a stove pipe. And he yelled out, 'That he didn't want to hear nothin' about no Doolan, and he wouldn't nuther.'

"And I took out my handkerchief, and cried on it, and he said, 'he'd overlook Doolan for once.'

"And then he says agin, in a kind of a solemn and warnin' way:

"Widder, I am a layin' on your feet, and my property is there, my land, my live stock, my houses, and my houses stuff, and I, are all a layin' on your feet. Make up your mind, and make it up at once, for if you don't consent, I have got other views ahead on me, which must be seen to instantly, and at once. Time is hastenin', and the world is full of willin' wimmen. Widder, what do you say?"

"And then," says she, "I kinder consented, and he said we'd be married the first of the week, and he'd turn off the hired girl, and I could come right there, and do the house work, and tend to the milk of fourteen cows, and be almost perfectly happy. He thought, as he wus hurried with his fall's work, we'd be married Sunday, so's not to break into the week's work; so we wus," says she, "we wus married last Sunday, and we kep' it still from you so's to surprise you."

"Truly you have," says I.

But I didn't have no time to add or multiply any more words, for my Josiah came jest then, and we started off homewards.

After we had well got started, Josiah spoke up, and begun to grumble and find fault about their marriage so soon after Nancy Cypher's decease.

He took on for as much as a mile, or a mile and a half. Says he:

"If Solemen Cypher didn't have no decency, nor know nothin', I should have thought the widder would have told him better."

But I looked him calmly in the face, and says I:

"Josiah, when you are doin' a sum in arithmetic, how much do you usually get to carry from an ort?"

And then I came out still more plainer, and says I:

"Ort from ort leaves how many, Josiah Allen?"

"Ort," says he. "But what under the sun are you a prancin' off into 'rithmetic for?"

"Wall," says I, calmly, "when you obtain anything to carry from an ort, then I will obtain sense from the widder, I mean the bride. But who would think of blamin' the ort?"

J. A. W.

THE VARIEGATION OF LEAVES.

THE variegation of leaves occurs so commonly that we do not often inquire into the cause of it. To the physiologist, however, the question of the origin of variegation is of considerable importance, and it certainly is not less so to the horticulturist, whether pleasure or profit be the main end of his endeavours. The normal colouring of leaves, whatever it may be, does not come directly into the consideration. A plant may produce red, purple, bronze, or blue leaves, and they may be as proper to it—that is to say, as natural and necessary—as any of the tints of green that more commonly prevail in leaf colouring.

By "variegation" must always be understood abnormal colouring, the most common forms of it being bands, blotches, edgings, and splashes of creamy white, or olive grey, or yellow, of several shades more or less intermixed with the normal green common to the plant when it is not variegated. The variations of variegation are endless, but there appears to be a common cause for them all, that cause, whatever it may be, operating in a variety of ways, so that in one case it results in white, grey, or creamy coloured variegation; and in another case in amber, gold yellow, or even deep orange coloured variegation; the selfsame species of plant being, perhaps, the subject of its diverse operations.

The ivies, hollies, and Japanese euonymus afford examples familiar to all, and are admirably adapted as material for the study of the subject. A vague application of the term "disease" is commonly accepted as explaining the cause of variegation. Notions that pass current in the world are more often sound than otherwise, and there is very much to be said in behalf of the explanation. Still it remains to determine the nature of the disease, and, if possible, give it a name.

In one view of the case we may be disposed to regard it as a kind of chlorosis, and in another as unmistakable etiolation. Usually it causes, or is accompanied, or is followed by a diminution of the vigour of the plant, but some variegated plants grow as freely as others of the same species that are not variegated, and generally speaking the vigour diminishes in proportion to the degree of etiolation, so that a growth purely white cannot be propagated, and soon passes away.

That the variegated portion of a leaf has less vigour than the green part is suggested by the often wrinkled appearance of it, the result of a more rapid growth of the green centre than the variegated margin. This suggests that defective assimilation, the result of debility, is the primary cause of variegation, a view of the case largely supported by the experience of cultivators, who have often produced variegation by starving a plant, and effaced variegation by liberally feeding it.

SINGING MICE.

A FEW winters since, while a lady was amusing herself at the piano, a mouse made his appearance on the threshold of the apartment, undismayed by the light or the presence of the family, chirped and caroled with intense satisfaction to itself, and to the great delight of its audience. Frequently afterward, but always in the evening, the rare songster repeated his performance. The piano keys were never struck that the mouse did not follow; but when the instrument was not touched, the music from the mouse would come, as if for a reminder. Sometimes the little animal made himself visible and sometimes had hidden in the pantry which, for reasons obvious to housekeepers, he, she, or it had selected as an abode.

One evening the mouse was traced to the stairway. Under the carpet sat the little creature, throwing his soul into his song. A lamp was placed beside him, and the family stood and looked and listened for half an hour or more,

His head was up, and the movements of his throat were plainly visible. Unfortunately our correspondent undertook to capture the singer. Many mice were caught and each was given twenty-four hours grace to sing for its life. But never after the treachery of the trap was the sound of the mouse's carol heard. If caught he died and made no sign.

FACETIAE.

RECKLESS.

"I WOULDN'T 'A' minded 'bout losing them three fingers by that 'ere buzz-saw," said a man, sadly, "but since that time I've kinder grown reckless, and gone on drinkin' and drinkin' by the wholesale, and never knowin' when ter stop."

"But what had the losing of the fingers to do with your becomin' a drunkard?" broke in the stranger.

"Why, you see," responded the inebriate, "them three fingers as I lost was the same ones as I allus used to gauge my gin with, an' when them was gone I was gone, too."

"And so candles have gone up again, and they say it's because of the war."

"Why, do they fight by candlelight?"

"No, but the Buzzards eat them."

TO MAKE A GOOD BOY.

PUT in pickle half-a-dozen stout penny canes. Then procure your boy when naughty. Take the boy into your study; take also the half-dozen canes.

Lock your study door.

Then take off your coat.

Then take off the boy's jacket.

Then tuck up your shirt-sleeves carefully; then take up one of the six canes.

Then— * * * * !

Then, again— * * * * !

Then, once more again— * * * * !

Then ask the boy how he feels by this time.

Then slap his head.

Then kick him from behind.

Then throw him down.

Then jump upon him heavily.

Then pull him up by one ear.

After this take up cane No. 4.

Then— * * * * !

Then, again— * * * * !

Then, still once more again— * * * * !

Then repeat process as before, only varying the monotony with the other ear.

By this time you will have a very good boy.

—Judy.

PRINTING FROM GLASS.

THEY are going to cast printing-types in glass! This is the latest application of glass, the use of which is now all the rage, so that it may be said to be the "glass of fashion" which is to be run into "the mould of form" to attain this result.

One merit of glass type is that it is "light"—a recommendation to persons who want to see to read between the lines. —Funny Folks.

MARRIED WOMEN.

AMONG the Acts which recently took effect was one to secure to married women in Scotland their property and earnings. With regard to husbands, they are only to be liable for ante-nuptial debts on the property derived from their wives.

A YANKEE OUTRAGE.

WE are inclined to be hospitable, but when an American wag came to our office and suggested, apropos to Grant's visit to Lyons, that "that 'ere Lady o' Lyons was the one that, as he guessed, Claw'd Melnotte," we felt bound sternly, though politely, to bid him begone. —Funny Folks.

"BERRY" MUCH SO.

THEY have in Victoria a Democratic Cabinet, known from its premier's name as the Berry Ministry. It is already called by the Opposition the mul-Berry Ministry. —Funny Folks.

HIS "TELEPHONE."

A DETROIT saloon-keeper has suffered much pecuniary loss at the hands of dead-beats, and has racked his brain for a remedy. It does not pay to knock a man down because he has no money, and harsh words collect a crowd and give a place to hard names.

The other day the saloonist got the idea he had been struggling after. He rigged up a wire, a mouthpiece, and other parts of a telephone, and was ready for the first call. A well-dressed and decent-looking man called for brandy, swallowed it, and softly said:

"I'll call around and settle as soon as I can get a cheque cashed."

"All right—all right," smiled the saloonist, and he stepped back to the mouthpiece and called out:

"Chief of Police, are you in?"

The beat halted to hear what was going on, and the saloonist continued:

"All right. I want to give you a description of a suspicious-looking character—just gone out of my saloon. Are you ready?"

There was an interval of two or three seconds, and the saloonist went on:

"About five feet eight—light hair—blue eyes—goatee—brown overcoat—black—"

"Say you!" exclaimed the beat, "here's your fifteen cents for that brandy! I had some change in my vest pocket!"

"Oh—ah—yes," smiled the saloonist, and taking the money he went to the mouthpiece and called:

"It's all right—I made a mistake—man is as good as wheat!"

The beat walked out without a word, but as he reached the street he growled:

"That was a dead give-away on me, and I'd like to punch old Professor Bell's head for about half an hour."

A CHALLENGE.

SIR.—I am not, I may tell you, the Champion Clog Dancer, nor the Jubilee Jumper. I cannot compare myself even with the Fathest Man in the World, or the Giants that weighs 784 lbs. I have not yet swum across the Channel, or bicycled from Paris to Vienna. No! I am a simple candidate for public honours; but it will not be my fault I am not yet canonised and waxified by Madame Tussaud.

I want to do a big thing—a bigger thing than Gale or Cleopatra's Needle. As the former has succeeded in walking 1,500 miles in 1,000 hours, I hereby challenge him to reverse the process, and walk backwards 1,000 miles in 1,500 hours. I am ready to do it, and to win the blue ribbon, before Cleopatra's Needle comes between the Gale and my nobility. I want to take the wind out of Gale's sails—I mean the airs out of him. But I will not walk with anyone who does not submit to professional rules.

He must, neither in walking nor training, regale himself on tea, coffee, eggs, beer, and walnuts, which I am grieved to hear Gale was not above doing. Such airs are worse to bear than Equinoctial gales. I am ready with the money up to £500. Yours faithfully,

CANCER JONES.

—Judy.

LIVING AND DYING.

"Ha!" said a father to his son William, "hearty breakfasts kill one half of the world, and tremendous suppers the other half."

"I suppose, then," retorted William, "that the true livers are only those who die of hunger?"

BRIGHAM's widows are going to bring out a book. It will be called "That Husband of Ours."

GOLDEN RULES.

FOR FATHERS OF FAMILIES.—Never waste money on self-indulgencies. Better give all your available spare cash to your wives and daughters, who will know how to spend it profitably—at the milliners' and dressmakers'.

FOR MOTHERS AND DAUGHTERS.—Never trouble yourselves with small economies or paupery

calculations. It is the business of the head of the family to earn money—yours to spend it.

FOR SONS.—Never know your own father out of the house. It is not considered genteel. Never keep a cash-book or diary, but draw cheques on the parental banker to any extent that may be necessary for your expenses.

FOR TETOTALEES.—Never drink except when you are thirsty; and, even then, not more than a gallon at a draught—cold, with a single tea-leaf, to give it a pleasant flavour. —Judy.

FRUITFUL.

THE King of Spain is to be married shortly to the Princess Mercedes d'Orleans. In addition to rank there is much suggestion of riches in this union. His Majesty is bound to possess plenty of "Spanish," while a lady of the house of Orleans can never be wanting a "plum."—Fun.

A CHARY COMPLIMENT.

THEY gave Her Majesty a triumphal arch of chairs when she honoured High Wycombe the other day. This was a delicate way of hinting that the sovereign was their chair reine.

—Fun.

ORATORICAL BLUNDERS.

It was a Frenchman—a famous Carlin—who, contentedly laying his head upon a large stone jar for a pillow, replied to one who inquired if it were not rather hard:

"Not at all, for I have stuffed it with hay."

It was an American lecturer who solemnly said one evening:

"Parents, you may have children; or, if not, your daughters may have."

It was a German orator who, warming with his subject, exclaimed:

"There is no man, woman or child in the house who has arrived at the age of fifty years, but what has felt the truth thundering through their minds for centuries."

SCOTT'S NOVELS.

(A Novel arrangement, suitable for all Readers.)

For the Irresolute—"Waver-ley."

For the Dishonest—"Rob Roy."

For Cautious Old Fogies—"The Antiquary."

For the "Touchy"—"Peveril of the Pique."

For Dog-Fanciers—"Kenzel-worth."

For Gardeners—"Ivan-hoe" and "Montrose."

For Musicians—"The Four-tunes of Nigel."

For "Little Niggers"—"The Black Dwarf."

For Essayists and Poets—"The Bride of Lamb-or-Moore."

For Cabmen—"The Fare Maid of Perth."

For Sir Wilfrid Lawson—"St. Ronan's Well."

For Mr. Gladstone—"Wood-stock."

For Mr. Whalley—"The Abbot" and "Monastery."

For H.H. Pius IX—"Old Mortality."

For Mr. Darwin—"Tails of a Grandfather."

—Funny Folks.

CURIOUS CASE.

"A PROFESSOR of surgery has been stabbed by a man whom he had discharged." It is to be presumed that the man was annoyed at being discharged before he was thoroughly convalescent. It is said that prevention is better than cure; cure in this case would have been prevention. But not having had the opportunity of being preventive, let us hope cure will be cure, as the matter stands.

—Fun.

STATISTICS.

METROPOLITAN POLICE STATISTICS.—The annual report states that during the past year the force available for police duty in the metropolis was 211 superintendents, 224 inspectors, 907 sergeants, and 7,859 constables. In the same period 226 new streets and three new squares had been opened, and 12,938 new houses built—a considerable increase over previous years. The number of persons arrested was 76,214, an increase of 3,603 over 1875, and 8,511

over 1874. The arrests for simple drunkenness show a decrease of 208, being 15,842 against 16,050 in 1875. Added to the report is a return showing the number of persons apprehended for drunkenness each year from 1831 to 1876. "On the whole," says the report, "though the average of the last six years has been higher than that of the preceding ten years, there does not appear to be any very great increase of drunkenness among the population, and much of the apparent increase of late years is due to the increased activity of the police under recent legislation." The convictions obtained against drink-houses have decreased. In offences against property there was a total increase of 1,623 over 1875—which, however, was a year exceptionally free from crime. The total number of indictable offences increased from 12,228 in 1875, to 13,990 in 1876. During the last ten years 1,135 persons have been killed and 21,827 maimed in the streets of London. In 1876, 172 men were dismissed.

THE ONLY GIFT HE OFFERED ME.

I.

THE old elm's whispering leaves I hear,
They tell a story sweet to me
Of many happy hours I've passed
Around that favourite, homestead tree.

Not gone are all the voices dear,
And there are faces still I know
Which made my life all joyousness

In the love-lighted long ago.

'Twas there that one first came to me

And spoke the sweetest words e'er heard,

Sweeter than lute's pure melody.

Sweeter than rarest song of bird.

No gift of house or land he brought,

Yet I was happy as could be,

A nature kind, an honest heart,

Was all the gift he offered me.

II.

And he was brave and not ashamed

To labour with a willing hand,

And earn a dwelling of his own

Surrounded by his own fair land.

And now when I with him return

To the old farm-house where my eyes

First saw a mother's smile, and caught

The glorious sunlight of the skies,

I'm proud of him—my farmer boy—

My husband true as true can be,

Who brought to me an honest heart

The only gift he offered me.

III.

And I am prouder, happier still

As on his head a hand I see

And blessings from a mother's lips

Are sweetly breathed for him and me.

I've heard of mansions grand and high,

The city's wealth, its air of pride,

Its ever restless teeming life,

Its scenes which to us are denied;

But envy is not in my breast,

I'm happy as a wife can be

With him who brought an honest heart—

The only gift he offered me.

C. B.

GEMS.

He who masters his passion subdues a fearful enemy.

The tears of affection are dewdrops from the blue sky of the soul.

The envious man grows base by contemplating the success of another.

Nobody takes a reproof so kindly as he that deserves most to be commended.

There is hardly any circumstance that it may not be worse.

We must love our friends as true amateurs

love paintings; they have their eyes perpetually

fixed on the fine parts, and see no others.

HOUSEHOLD TREASURES.

LIQUID SHOE POLISH.—The following is a German recipe: Dissolve three and a half ounces of shellac in half a pint of alcohol. Rub smooth 25 grains of lampblack with 6 drachms of cod-liver oil, and mix. A few drops are to be applied to the leather with a sponge.

SAGO JELLY.—A teacupful of sago, boiled in three pints and a half of water till ready. When cold add half a pint of raspberry syrup. Pour into a shape which has been rinsed in cold water, and let it stand until it is sufficiently set to turn out well. When dished, pour a little cream round it.

BUCKWHEAT CAKES.—To every three bushels of buckwheat add one of good heavy oats; grind them together as if there was only buckwheat; thus will you have cakes always light and always brown, to say nothing of the greater digestibility and the lightening of spirits, which are equally certain.

PASTRY SANDWICHES.—Roll some puff paste out thin, put half of it on a baking-sheet or tin, and spread equally over it apricot, greengage, or any preserve that may be preferred. Lay over this preserve another thin paste, press the edges together all round, and mark the paste in lines with a knife on the surface to show where to cut it when baked. Bake from twenty minutes to half-an-hour, and a short time before being done take the pastry out of the oven, brush it over with the white of an egg, sift over some pounded sugar, and put it back in the oven to colour. When cold, cut it into strips; pile these on a dish and serve.

HUITRES A LA DIABLE.—Parboil some oysters in their own liquor, take off the beards and hard parts, cut up the remainder into small pieces, season well with cayenne and salt, and add a little lemon juice. Take the liquor in which the oysters were boiled, and add it to a thickening of butter and flour, put in the minced oysters, and stir over the fire until quite cooked, then add, off the fire, the yolks of one or two eggs, beaten up with a little cream. Spread out the mixture to get cold, then divide it into small portions, roll up each portion into the thinnest possible wafer of parboiled bacon. Just before frying dip each roll into some frying batter, put them into the frying basket, and fry in hot lard or butter. Serve garnished with fried parsley.

MISCELLANEOUS.

An exhibition of paintings "by the old masters of the Italian, Flemish, Dutch, German, Spanish, and French Schools, and by deceased artists of the British School," has been opened in the Conduit Galleries, Conduit Street, Regent Street.

The San Francisco mint is the most productive institution of the kind in the world. Its coined last year amounted to 42,704,500 dollars, more than the aggregate production of the three largest mints in Great Britain.

KANGAROO LEATHER.—Kangaroo hides have already become an important article of export from Australia. They make the most pliable leather that is known, admirably fitted for boot-leather, gloves, and riding whips. The skins are sent to Europe, some tanned, and some simply dried.

The famous block of rock crystal from Japan, which was lost by the sinking of the "Nile" a couple of years since, has just been recovered by divers, and it is said to be as beautiful as if it had never left the Imperial palace, where it had been an object of admiration for ages.

One of the largest gold balances in the world was recently made for the United States mint by Henry Troemner, of Philadelphia. The beam measures five feet six inches in length, and is mounted on agate bearings, with a capacity of 10,000 troy ounces (about 600 pounds) in each pan, and is sensible to a single grain when loaded. Over twenty million dollars in gold passes over this balance yearly. The workmanship is of the very finest.

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NOTICES TO CORRESPONDENTS.

A CONSTANT READER.—Sir James Robert Longdon is the present Governor of Ceylon. The pearl fisheries there are the cause of much activity during the short time they last—about a month in each year—but your chances of obtaining permanent employment in Ceylon are not we think likely to be favourably affected by them. Any bookseller should be able to give you information about the most suitable selection you can make from the different books published respecting the island—say, Sir James Emerson Tennent's "Ceylon: An Account of the Island, Physical, Historical and Topographical" (6th ed., 1864) and "Natural History of Ceylon" (1861); Bannonet's "Ceylon" (1868); Captain Percival's "Ceylon" or Sir Samuel Baker's "Rifle and Hounds in Ceylon" (1853) and "Eight Years' Wanderings in Ceylon" (1855).

COURT.—Her Majesty the Queen, Alexandrina Victoria, belongs to the House of Guelph, being the daughter of Edward Duke of Kent and Strathern in Great Britain and Earl of Dublin in Ireland (fourth son of George the Third) and Her Serene Highness Victoria Mary Louisa, daughter of His Serene Highness Francis Duke of Saxe-Coburg-Saalfeld and widow of His Serene Highness Emich Charles, reigning Prince of Leiningen.

CHINA.—The present population of China is probably about 400,000,000. According to the census of 1812 (believed to be reliable) the inhabitants numbered 362,477,183, spread over an area of 1,207,999 English square miles, or 298 to the square mile. The population of England and Wales in 1871 was computed to be 22,704,108 with an area of 38,320 square miles.

L. E. P.—1. Soap and water mixed with ox-gall will be found one of the best substances with which to clean marble. Oil and grease can be removed by spreading upon the marble a paste composed of caustic potash lye, fuller's earth and soft soap, which should be allowed to remain for a few days on the marble, then washed off with clean water. 2. Equal parts of American potash (crude carbonate of potash) and whiting made into a stiff paste with boiling water and put on with a brush, to be washed off with soap and water after two or three days. Defect of polish can be brought up with tripoli, followed by putty powder, both used with water. 2. Writing extremely good—for ordinary purposes. No improvement is necessary. Of the two specimens submitted to our judgment we decidedly prefer the second.

A LOVER OF FLOWERS.—1. Some short account of Santa Claus, or St. Nicholas, is to be found in Wheeler's "Noted Names of Fiction," under heads "St. Nicholas" and "Kris-Kringle," published by Bell and Daldy. We are not aware that there is any book treating exclusively of the legend. 2. A "wyvern" is a fictitious monster of the Middle Ages of frequent occurrence in heraldry. It resembles a dragon, but has only two legs and feet, which are those of an eagle. Most likely it was either a stone figure or a weathercock of this shape above the house. 3. There are purple, violet, dark blue, light blue, flesh-colour, deep yellow, pale yellow and white varieties of Abonites. 4. The tree-carnation grows to the height of five or six feet, flowering annually and living about the same number of years; it requires to be trained against a wall, or stake.

H. J.—Papier-mâche articles are prepared first by pasting or glueing sheets of paper together and then submitting them to powerful pressure, by which the composition acquires the hardness of board when dry. Papier-mâche possesses great strength and lightness. It may be made partially waterproof by the addition of sulphate of iron, quicklime and glue or white of egg to the pulp, and perfectly so by japanning. Borax and phosphate of soda render it incombustible.

W. T. has responded to only four young ladies at once—all his letters being couched in a similarly loving strain. Our correspondent seems desirous of having several strings to his bow, but he may find that it is difficult to play upon the heart-strings of the fair sex with such an unstable beau.

D. E. E.—To improve one's writing is no impossible task. Get some good copies and imitate them carefully. Patience and perseverance in that as well as in most things surmount difficulties.

ADMIREER.—Send to the office of THE LONDON READER, 334, Strand, W.C., for the back numbers—they are in print and will be forwarded at one penny each, exclusive of postage. The "Love Pact" commenced in No. 759. Thanks for commendations.

Dor and Sis, twins, would like to correspond with two gentlemen. Both have brown hair and eyes, fond of home and children.

CLARA, thirty-five, fond of home, of a loving disposition, wishes to correspond with a tall gentleman older than herself.

NELLY and JENNY, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Nelly is nineteen, medium height, dark hair, grey eyes. Jenny is seventeen, tall, auburn hair, blue eyes, considered good-looking.

C., twenty-five, medium height, fair, would like to correspond with a young lady about twenty, brown hair and eyes, fair.

CATHLEEN and CLARA, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Cathleen is twenty-four, dark, hazel eyes, fond of home, thoroughly domesticated. Clara is twenty-one, curly hair, blue eyes, medium height, good-looking, fond of home and children.

JERRY, twenty, fair, tall, good-looking, fond of home and children, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be about twenty, dark, medium height, good-looking, and fond of music.

W. J. D. and C. D., two seamen in the Royal Navy, would like to correspond with two young ladies with a view to matrimony. W. J. D. is twenty-two, medium height, light brown hair, blue eyes, fond of home. C. D. is twenty-one, dark brown hair and eyes, medium height, fond of home and children.

NELL, nineteen, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy. Must be about twenty, good-looking, dark.

T. B. and A. C., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. T. B. is twenty, tall, light brown hair and eyes, fair, fond of home. A. C. is twenty-one, medium height, brown hair and eyes, thoroughly domesticated.

HERRWARD, twenty-three, tall, dark, wishes to correspond with a young lady.

ANNIE and LIZZIE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Annie is twenty-one, tall, fair, of a loving disposition. Lizzie is fair, medium height, fond of home and children.

MARY O' THE LEA.

WHERE sweet the bonnie streamlet sings
Its never tiring, cheerfully lay,
Where fair the flowers in beauty spring
Upon its banks the live-long day.
My Mary dwells in a thatched cot,
Beneath the waving auld oak tree,
Where sings the thrush its sweetest note
Tae Mary, bonnie Mary o' the lea.

Hoo sweet tae walk at eventide,
Where fa's the dew upon each flower,
Wi' smiling Mary by my side
Tae cheer and pass the weary hour;
Tis then a' seems tae be mair bright
And wears their fairest hue tae see;
But though a' fair, the fairest sight
Is Mary, lovely Mary o' the lea.

When fortune first me Mary gave
I truly was supremely blessed,
And thought na o' misfortune's wave,
That does sae aff disturb one's rest;
Though troubles a' I've my desire,
And though sae grieve may come tae me,
I'll bear it a' for thare inspires
Sweet Mary, bonnie Mary o' the lea. S. R. N.

G. E. and C. G., two friends, would like to correspond with two young ladies. G. E. is nineteen, tall, light hair, blue eyes. C. G. is twenty, tall, dark hair, good-looking, fond of dancing.

CHRIS and ANDY, mechanics, would like to correspond with two young women with a view to matrimony. Chris is twenty-seven, tall, dark curly hair, blue eyes. Andy is twenty-three, tall, light hair.

MABEL, twenty-six, wishes to correspond with a young gentleman about the same age.

M. C. L., twenty-seven, fond of home, brown hair, hazel eyes, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady with a view to matrimony about twenty-two, medium height, dark hair and eyes, fond of dancing.

A. A., twenty-five, medium height, fair, and of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a young lady. Must be about twenty, brown hair and eyes, fair, good-looking.

M. W. and L. D., two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. M. W. is twenty, tall, dark hair, blue eyes. L. D. is eighteen, brown hair, blue eyes. Respondents must be tall, dark, and of loving dispositions.

LONG TOM, LONGER TOM, and LONGEST TOM, three sailors in the Royal Navy, wish to correspond with three young ladies. Long Tom is twenty-seven, light hair, blue eyes. Longer Tom is twenty-three, light hair, hazel eyes. Longest Tom has brown hair, blue eyes. All are of loving dispositions. Respondents must be between eighteen and twenty-three.

M. A., twenty-one, curly hair, blue eyes, tall, would like to correspond with a young man with a view to matrimony. Respondent must be twenty-two, tall, dark, of a loving disposition.

LILY and ROSE, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen with a view to matrimony. Lily is twenty-one, fair, blue eyes, fond of home. Rose is twenty-one, dark, hazel eyes. Respondents must be of medium height, fond of home.

HELEN, nineteen, medium height, fair, of a loving disposition, would like to correspond with a seaman in the Royal Navy. Respondent must be about twenty-one, good-looking, dark, of a loving disposition, fond of home and music.

GERTRUDE, CONSTANCE, and FLORENCE, three friends would like to correspond with three young men with view to matrimony. Gertrude is eighteen, dark hair and eyes, good-looking, fond of home and music, domesticated. Constance is twenty, auburn hair, blue eyes, tall, good-tempered, medium height, fond of music and dancing. Florence is seventeen, good-looking, domesticated, brown eyes.

G. E., twenty-five, light hair, grey eyes, fair, fond of home, would like to correspond with a young lady about the same age.

MAGGIE and SARAH, two friends, would like to correspond with two young gentlemen. Maggie is of medium height, dark brown hair and eyes. Sarah has dark hair, hazel eyes.

ADOLPHUS, twenty-one, fair, medium height, would like to correspond with a young lady between seventeen and twenty.

SARAH, twenty-two, medium height, fair, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home, would like to exchange carte-de-visite with a gentleman.

T. B., L. L., and D. T., three friends, would like to correspond with three young ladies. T. B. is twenty-two, brown hair and eyes, good-looking, medium height, dark. L. L. is twenty-five, good-looking, brown hair, blue eyes. D. T. is twenty-four, brown hair, hazel eyes, loving, tall. Respondents must be between nineteen and twenty-four, domesticated.

COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVED:

R. M. is responded to by—K. E., eighteen, and rather fair.

ELENA by—Charlie, twenty-seven, good-looking, passable manners.

HAMBURG by—Pollic, nineteen, fair, dark brown hair and eyes.

HARRY by—Rose, nineteen, tall, dark.

BILL by—Lottie, eighteen, dark eyes, fair, of a loving disposition.

KATE by—V. H. J.

G. H. T. by—Bertha, tall, good-looking, and of a loving disposition.

J. S. by—Minnie, twenty-one, good-looking, fond of home.

S. R. by—M. J. B., good-looking.

L. N. M. by—A. M. F., brown hair, dark blue eyes, good-looking.

RHODA by—Timothy.

GRACE by—W. T.

W. F. N. by—Ide, twenty, tall, dark hair, fond of dancing.

R. T. by—Floss, seventeen, dark hair and eyes, fond of children.

JANIE M. by—W. T.

EDWARD by—Rhoda, twenty-six, medium height, dark hair and eyes.

H. H. H. by—Mabel, twenty-two, dark hair, blue eyes, fond of home, loving.

BRIDGET D. by—C. M., thirty.

C. S. by—Alice B., tall, good-looking, fond of home and dancing.

W. B. by—Lottie B., nineteen.

HUGH C. by—Lily P.

EMMA by—William.

G. E. W. by—S. H., twenty-nine, thoroughly domesticated, fond of home, medium height.

W. F. M. by—Mabel.

J. J. E. by—Floss.

W. L. by—Jenny.

PHYLLIS by—Midge.

H. H. H. by—Nance.

SWORD & LANCE by—Gertrude, eighteen, brown hair and eyes, medium height.

E. L. by—Gamma.

W. B. by—Alice, of a loving disposition, blue eyes, medium height.

C. S. by—Maggie, brown eyes, fond of home and dancing.

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London : Published for the Proprietors at 334, Strand, by A. Smith & Co.